USEFUL and IMPORTANT

QUESTIONS

CONCERNING

JESUS the Son of GOD

FREELY PROPOSED:

With a HUMBLE ATTEMPT to Anſwer them according to SCRIPTURE.

QUEST. I. What is the true Meaning of the Name SON OF GOD, given to *Chriſt* in the New Teſtament, and eſpecially where the Belief of it is made neceſſary to Salvation?

QUEST. II. Did the Diſciples of *Chriſt* certainly believe that *Jeſus* was the True and Eternal God during his Life-time, or not 'till after his Death and Reſurrection?

QUEST. III. Could the *Son of God* properly enter into a Covenant with GOD his Father before the Creation, to do and ſuffer what was neceſſary to our Redemption without having any human Soul which might conſent to ſuffer?

With ſeveral other ENQUIRIES of equal Moment.

To which is Added,

A Charitable ESSAY

On the true Importance of any Human Schemes to explain the Sacred Doctrine of the TRINITY.

LONDON,

Printed; and ſold by J. OSWALD, at the *Roſe* and *Crown* near the *Manſion-Houſe*; and J. BUCKLAND, at the *Buck* in *Pater-noſter-Row*. 1746.

(Price ſtitch'd 2*s*.)

QUESTIONS

Jesus the SON of GOD

BRITISH MUSEUM

With several other Enquiries of equal Moment.

A Charitable ESSAY

Printed and Sold by J. OSBORN, at the Red-ead
Orrery near the Mercury-Office; and B. DICKINSON,
at the Bible in Paternoster-Row. 1746.
(Price Sixpence.)

THE PREFACE.

IT cannot be of much Importance for the Reader to be informed who was the Writer of these Papers: Yet if it will be any Satisfaction, the Author himself presumes to say, It is one who has spent many Years of his Life in diligent Inquiries into the sacred Doctrines of the Gospel, by a constant and laborious Search of the Holy Scriptures, nor is he ashamed to add, with continual Application to the God of all Light and Grace for the Instruction of his Holy Spirit, that he might better understand the Things discover'd in his

Word. He alſo takes the freedom to ſay, theſe Papers are the Product of that part of Life when his Powers of Mind and Body were in full Vigour.

The Author has ſometimes been ready to ſuppoſe, that ſeveral of the Queſtions here propoſed, may be very uſeful towards the further explaining ſome of thoſe Parts of Scripture which have been leſs ſtudied, eſpecially concerning God the Father, *and the Divine and Human Natures of his* Son Jeſus Chriſt, *whom to know, to truſt in, and to love, is eternal Life: and he thinks he can ſafely appeal to God concerning the Honeſty and Sincerity of his own Endeavours, to give a faithful Anſwer to all theſe Enquiries, according to the clearеſt Light he could find in the Holy Scriptures.*

He has one Favour to beg of his Readers, and that is, that they would not examine any of theſe Papers by the mere

Dictates of their own reaſoning Powers, for the Subject is a mere Matter of Divine Revelation; nor that they would take the Sentiments or Schemes of elder or later Writers, whether Schoolmen or Fathers, or Divines of any Party, for a perfect Teſt of Truth and Orthodoxy in theſe ſacred Subjects.

Yet he freely and delightfully confeſſes theſe following Articles borrow'd from the Athanaſian *Creed*, (viz.) We believe and confeſs the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, is both God and Man; God of the ſame Subſtance with the Father, and Man of the Subſtance of his Mother, *born* into the World; perfect God and perfect Man; of a reaſonable Soul, and human Fleſh ſubſiſting *together*: Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, and yet inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood; One, not by Converſion of the Godhead into the Fleſh, but by taking of the Manhood into God,

God, *ſo as to become one perſonal Agent, or* one Perſon: and as the reaſonable Soul and Fleſh is one Man, ſo God and Man are one Chriſt, who ſuffered for our Salvation, *&c.*

Tho' I freely and chearfully acknowledge all this, yet I take no human Writings for a Teſt of the Divinity or Truth of my Opinions: And I could wiſh all my Readers would lay aſide all other Teachers, beſides the mere Writers of the Holy Scriptures, in ſuch Enquiries where the Light of theſe Divine Truths will alſo ſhine brighteſt, which are not to be known by the mere Light of Nature, but are intirely to be learned by the Revelation of God to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, *and to his holy Apoſtles.*

And if this Practice be ſincerely purſued, the Author humbly hopes theſe Papers may find Acceptance among the diligent and honeſt Enquirers

quirers after Truth, ſo far at leaſt as to have his unwilling Miſtakes pitied and forgiven, and his ſincere Endeavours accepted, to make known the Scripture to his Fellow-Chriſtians in thoſe important Articles that relate to God the Father *and his* Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, *which are of ſo much Importance toward our Salvation.*

Yet finally to avoid all Objections *and Dangers of Miſtake, I think it may be proper here to take notice, that there have been generally two ways among our* Proteſtant *Divines allowed to explain the* Filiation *or* Sonſhip *of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *in his Divine Nature; the one is, the Real and Supernatural, which is granted to be utterly incomprehenſible, relating chiefly to the Nature of the Father and the Son; the other is Scriptural and Oeconomical, relating chiefly to their Characters or Offices in our Salvation, which is more eaſy to be underſtood:*

ſtood: I muſt acknowledge I incline moſt to the ſecond, becauſe this allows the moſt perfect Equality, even Oneneſs or Sameneſs in the Godhead, whether applied to the Father *or the* Son, *and thus it maintains the true Godhead itſelf to be underived and ſelf-exiſtent in both; and upon this Suppoſition I believe the ſecond of theſe Writers have been always eſteemed perfectly ſound and orthodox, as well as the firſt.*

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QUESTION I.

What is the meaning of the Name Son of God, *as given to* Chriſt *in the New Teſtament, where the Belief of it is neceſſary to Salvation?*

INTRODUCTION.

'TIS of ſome Importance in the Doctrines of the Goſpel, and eſpecially in the great Article of the bleſſed *Trinity*, to know the meaning of the Name SON OF GOD, which is ſo often given to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in the New Teſtament: for hereby we ſhall be better able to underſtand the chief Import and Deſign of thoſe Places of Scripture.

But here I deſire my Reader to obſerve, that I am not enquiring into the higheſt and moſt ſublime Senſe of which 'tis poſſible that our Lord himſelf might have the Idea when he uſed that Word; but what is the Senſe that *Chriſt* or the Apoſtles and Writers of the New Teſtament

more directly designed to convey to those who heard them, and in what Sense the People generally could and did understand this Name.

'Tis evident from several Expressions of *Christ*, that he well knew that his own Words sometimes carried in them a much nobler and sublimer Signification, than barely that which he designed to convey to the *Jews*, or even to his own Disciples at that Time: As when he says to the *Jews*, *Before Abraham was I am*, John 8. 58. And so when he says to his Disciples, *John* 14. 10. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, they could not know that glorious and sublime Relation of *Christ* to the Father, and his intimate *Oneness* with the Father, which he himself was perfectly acquainted with.

My chief Business in this Discourse therefore is only to show what is the true Idea or Meaning of the Word *Son of God*, which our Saviour or the sacred Writers designed to convey to their Disciples thro' all Ages and Nations by this *Name*, and in which 'tis possible their Hearers could understand them, or we who read the same Words.

And in order to find this Sense of it, let us consider those Texts of Scripture wherein the Belief of *Christ* to be the *Son of God* is made the great Requisite in order to Salvation, and a necessary Ingredient of Christianity. For in these places of Scripture, these two Considerations will offer themselves, (1.) That

the Senſe of theſe Words muſt be *plain, familiar, and eaſy to be underſtood*; otherwiſe it could not be made a neceſſary Article, or a *Fundamental* of the Chriſtian Faith. It muſt have alſo (*2dly*) *ſome apparent Connexion with and Influence into our Salvation*, otherwiſe the Belief of it would not have been made ſo grand a Requiſite in order to be ſaved; for it is ſcarce to be imagined that the bleſſed God would appoint any mere arbitrary and unoperative Speculations to be the Terms of our enjoying his favour. Now, both theſe Conſiderations will give us ſome Aſſiſtance toward our finding out the true Senſe of this Title.

The Texts of Scripture, wherein a Belief of *Jeſus* to be the *Son of God* ſeems to be made the great neceſſary Term of our Salvation, are ſuch as theſe. *John* 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* John 20. 31. *Theſe things are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.* 1 John 5. 13. *Theſe things have I written to you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God.* 1 John 4. 15. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God*

dwelleth in him. 1 John 2. 23. *Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father.* Acts 8. 37. *And Philip ſaid to the Eunuch, if thou believeſt with all thy Heart, thou mayſt be baptized; and he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God:* and he baptized him.

Now if *believing or not believing Chriſt to be the Son of God* has Salvation and Damnation annexed to it by the ſacred Writers, then ſurely 'tis of conſiderable Importance to know what this Name means, that we may not include *too little* in it, and by leaving out ſome important Part, expoſe *ourſelves* to that Anathema; nor include *too much* in it, and ſo be tempted to lay our *weaker Neighbours* under the like Condemnation for want of ſufficient Knowledge.

But bleſſed be God, ſince it is a Name of ſuch Importance, he has not confined this Name preciſely to one ſingle, narrow, abſtruſe and difficult Idea, but has affixed it to ſeveral Ideas in Scripture, that ſo if we receive it in the moſt important Senſes, we may be ſecured from the ſcriptural Condemnation, tho' we ſhould not happen to underſtand and receive it in all the ſublime Senſes which may be applied to it.

Let it be noted alſo, that perhaps the various Imaginations and Reaſonings of Men may have affixed more Senſes to this Phraſe than Scripture

Scripture has ever done: Yet, in order to give this Enquiry a fuller Conſideration, we will ſurvey the ſeveral Senſes which have been uſually put upon it; and this ſhall be the *firſt Argument* which I ſhall uſe toward the Proof of the true Signification of this Name in the New Teſtament, *i. e.* by way of a disjunctive Syllogiſm, propoſing ſeveral and excluding ſome of them.

SECT. I. *The firſt Argument toward the Proof of the Senſe of this Name*, Son of God.

THIS Name, *Son of God*, hath been ſuppoſed to be given to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* upon ſome or all of theſe five accounts. (1.) Becauſe of an eternal and unconceivable Generation by the Perſon of the Father in the Sameneſs of the Divine Eſſence. (2.) Becauſe of the glorious Derivation of his human Soul from God before the Creation of this World. (3.) Becauſe of his Incarnation or coming into this World by an extraordinary Conception, and Birth of a Virgin without an earthly Father, by the immediate Operation of God. (4.) Becauſe of his Reſurrection from the Dead, and high Exaltation. (5.) In order to point out that glorious Perſon who had in general ſome ſublime and ſingular Relation to God, and who alſo was to ſuſtain the Cha-

racter and Office of the *Meſſiah*, the Saviour of the World.

I. The *firſt* of theſe Senſes is patronized by many Writers, *viz. That an eternal unconceiveable Generation of the Perſon of the Son by the Perſon of the Father in the Sameneſs of the Divine Eſſence, conſubſtantial, coequal and coeternal with the Father*, is included in the Name Son of God.

But I am perſuaded this can never be the Senſe of this Name in thoſe ſeveral Texts before cited: They can never ſignify, that it is neceſſary to Salvation to believe *Chriſt* to be the *eternal Son of God as a diſtinct Perſon in the ſame Divine Eſſence, proceeding from the Father* by ſuch an *eternal and incomprehenſible Generation.* For,

1. If this be never ſo true, yet it is confeſt to be unconceiveable. Now, if it be ſo very unconceiveable, ſo myſterious and ſublime a Doctrine, then I do not think the gracious God would put ſuch a difficult Teſt upon the Faith of young Diſciples, poor illiterate Men and Women, in the very Beginning of the Goſpel, and exclude them from Heaven for not believing it.

2. Nor indeed is this *eternal Generation and conſubſtantial Sonſhip* clearly enough revealed in Scripture for us to make it a *fundamental Article* in any Age, and to damn all who don't receive it. I cannot ſee Evidence enough in the Word of God to make the

the Salvation of all Mankind, the Poor and the Ignorant, the labouring Men and the Children, (even in ſuch a Day of Knowledge as this is) to depend on ſuch a Doctrine, which the moſt learned and pious Chriſtians in all Ages have confeſt to be attended with ſo many Difficulties, which, after the Labour and Study of near 1400 Years, is ſo unconceiveable in itſelf, and was at firſt ſo obſcurely revealed; much leſs can I ſuppoſe this notion of the *Son of God* could be made a neceſſary and fundamental Article in thoſe Dawnings of the Goſpel-day.

Beſides, 3. There have been ſome very pious and learned Men in ſeveral Ages, who have acknowledged *Chriſt's true Godhead*, and yet have ſuppoſed that the *Sonſhip* of *Chriſt* referred rather to his *human Nature*, or to his Office of *Meſſiah*, than to ſuch an *eternal Generation* and *conſubſtantial Sonſhip:* And there are ſome in our Age who have given ſufficient Proofs of their good Learning and ſincere Piety, who heartily believe the *eternal Godhead of Chriſt*, and yet doubt or disbelieve this *eternal Generation and Derivation* of his Perſon, as God, and I will never pronounce an *Anathema* upon them.

Object. But ſome will ſay, " If the Name " *Son of God* doth not ſignify *eternal Ge-* " *neration by the Father in the Sameneſs* " *of the Divine Eſſence* or *Subſtance*, yet

" ſurely it muſt at leaſt import *Chriſt's true* " *and eternal Godhead.*"

Anſw. 1. This Name *Son* and *Sons of God* is often uſed in the Bible, and applied variouſly to *Men* and to *Angels* as well as to *Chriſt*: but 'tis never uſed in any one place to ſignify *true and eternal Godhead* that I can find, unleſs it be in thoſe very Places which are at preſent under Debate. And therefore when *Chriſt* is called eminently and abſolutely *the Son of God*, the Meaning of it does not neceſſarily riſe higher than that he is the moſt eminent of all other Beings (Men or Angels) that are called *Sons of God*, without a certain Determination whether he be *true God*, or no, by the mere uſe of that Name.

Anſw. 2. This Name *Son of God* cannot neceſſarily ſignify his *true Godhead* any otherwiſe, than by ſuppoſing it *primarily* to ſignify his *coeſſential Sonſhip*, or that he is a *Son* of the ſame Nature and Eſſence with the Father, even as a Son among Men has the ſame *ſpecifical Eſſence* with his Father, and then conſequentially that the *Son of God* is *true God*, becauſe his *Father* is ſo. Now, we have before proved, that this Name cannot neceſſarily ſignify his *coeſſential* or *conſubſtantial Sonſhip*, and therefore it cannot neceſſarily ſignify his true Godhead.

Anſw. 3. It is evident from ſome Parts of the Conduct of *Peter* and other Diſciples during

during the Life of *Chriſt* on Earth, that they did not heartily believe they had the true and eternal God among them, and that their Maſter was the true and eternal God, as when they rebuked him, when they queſtioned his Knowledge of ſome things, when they wondered, and were ſo aſtoniſhed at his working Miracles, *&c.* as I ſhall ſhew hereafter: Yet 'tis plain that they then believed him to be the *Son of God*; for this was made neceſſary to their Salvation in that day, and they profeſt this Belief roundly, that he was the *Son of God.* Therefore this Name does not certainly declare his Divine Nature.

Obj. 2. It will be ſaid then, How comes it to paſs, that when the High Prieſt asked our Saviour, *Art thou the Chriſt the Son of the Bleſſed? And Jeſus anſwered, I am*, Mark. 14. 61, 62, in ℣. 64. he charges our Saviour *with Blaſphemy*, if his calling himſelf the *Son of God* did not imply his *true Godhead?*

Anſw. It is evident that the Deſign of the wicked *Jews* was to fix the higheſt and moſt criminal Charge they could againſt him: But there was no ſufficient Foundation for this Charge, which our Saviour in another Place fully proves, *John* 10. 33, 34. as I have ſhewn elſewhere, in what follows. Thus it appears, that tho' it be fully agreed that *Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Son of God*, has true Godhead belonging to him, becauſe divine

Names and Titles are given him, yet this Name *Son of God* does not neceſſarily and certainly diſcover or imply it. Thus much for the firſt ſuppoſed Senſe of this Name.

II. Some may ſuppoſe the Name *Son of God* relates to his *human Soul*, and ſignifies the *glorious peculiar Derivation of it from God the Father* before the Creation of the World, and that in this Senſe he is called *the firſt-born of every Creature*, and the *Beginning of the Creation of God.* Col. 1. 15. and *Rev.* 3. 14.

Anſw. Tho' I am very much inclin'd to believe that *Chriſt* is in this Senſe the *Son of God*, and that his human Soul had ſuch a glorious Derivation from the Father before the Creation of the World, and that he is the *firſt-born of every Creature* and the *Beginning of the Creation of God*, as in *Col.* 1. 15. and that his human Soul had as noble a Pre-eminence above other Souls in its Origin, as his human Body had a Pre-eminence above other Bodies, that ſo *in all things he might have the Pre-eminence*, *Col.* 1. 18. Yet I cannot think this preciſe Idea is the very thing deſigned in thoſe Texts of Scripture, wherein our Salvation is made to depend on the *Belief of Chriſt being the Son of God*; for,

(1) Tho' the Apoſtles *Paul* and *John*, and perhaps the reſt of them, arrived at this compleat Idea of his *glorious pre-exiſtent Human Soul*

Soul in due time, yet it doth not appear evidently that the Diſciples had all attained ſuch an Idea ſo ſoon as they believed that he was the *Son of God*, in a ſufficient manner for their attaining the Favour of God and a State of Salvation *.

(2) There have been thouſands of Chriſtians in ſeveral Ages of the Church who have been ſaved, and yet have not entertained this Opinion concerning the *Soul of Chriſt*, that it had a Being before the World was created, and and that it was the *firſt-born of all the Creatures of God*; and therefore this cannot be the Senſe of that Title in thoſe Texts.

III. I ſay therefore, in the *Third* place, that this Title, *Son of God*, is given to *Chriſt*, ſometimes upon the account of his *Incarnanion and miraculous Birth.* Luke 1. 31, 32. *Thou ſhalt bring forth a Son, and ſhalt call his Name Jeſus: he ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt.* ℣. 35. *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon Thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow Thee; therefore alſo that Holy thing that ſhall be born of Thee ſhall be called* THE SON OF GOD.

Tho'

* I will not deny but that one conſiderable Ground on which *Chriſt* was called the *Son of God*, at firſt, and for which he eminently merited that Name, was the Dignity of his human Soul both in the native Excellencies of it, and in the original and early Generation, or peculiar Way of Creation of it before all other Creatures: But as the Belief of his, being the *Son of God*, is made a Requiſite to Salvation, I ſuppoſe the Idea of that Title *Son of God*, ariſes no higher than to mean in general ſome glorious Relation to God, partly *natural*, and partly *oeconomical*, without a preciſe Determination how far this Relation reach'd, as will appear more particularly afterward.

Tho' God be the *Father* of all Men by *Creation*, and the *Father* of all the Saints by a *New Creation* or *Regeneration*, yet in a more eſpecial manner he is the Father of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*; becauſe his Body was ſo formed or *begotten* by him, in ſo peculiar a manner, as no other Man ever was.

But this cannot be the chief Meaning of the Name *Son of God* in the Texts before cited: For ſurely the Belief that the Man *Chriſt Jeſus was begotten of God and born of a Virgin without an earthly Father*, was not made the Term of Salvation any where that we can find in the *New Teſtament*. 'Tis not this ſort of *Sonſhip* that *Chriſt* and the Apoſtles lay ſo great a ſtreſs on, nor make the matter of their Sermons, and the Labour of their Arguments, to convince the World of it in order to their Salvation. This Circumſtance of his extraordinary Birth, doth not ſeem to have any ſuch ſpecial Connexion with the Redemption and Salvation of Men, as to have it made the peculiar Matter of their Faith and the very Article on which their Salvation was to depend.

Doubtleſs many a poor Creature might become a true Believer in *Chriſt* when he was upon Earth, by the Sight of his Miracles, and hearing his Doctrine, without the Knowledge of this *particular Circumſtance of his Incarnation or Birth*; and doubtleſs many a one was converted by the Apoſtles without any Notice

Notice of this part of the Hiſtory of *Chriſt*; for we ſcarce find ſo much as the Mention of it in their Preaching or Writings. This therefore cannot be the Meaning of this Name, in thoſe Scriptures.

IV. In the *Fourth* place, *Chriſt* may be ſometimes called the *Son of God*, becauſe of his *Reſurrection from the Dead*, and his *Exaltation to univerſal Dominion*, by the peculiar Favour and Power of God. In this Senſe *Chriſt* is ſaid to be *begotten of God* when he is raiſed from the Dead, *Act.* 13. 32, 33. *And we declare unto you glad Tidings, how that the Promiſe which was made unto the Fathers, God hath fulfilled the ſame unto their Children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſecond Pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* And 'tis upon this account that he is called *the firſt-begotten of the Dead*, Rev. 1. 5. and *the firſt-born from the Dead*, Col. 1. 18. tho' the *Greek* Word is in both Places the ſame (*viz.*) πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, becauſe he was raiſed immediately by God himſelf from the Earth into eternal Life.

His Exaltation to the Kingdom as Heir of all things, is ſuppos'd to be a farther Ground of this Title. *Heb.* 1. 2. *His Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things.* Pſ. 89. 27. *I will make him my firſt-born, higher than the Kings of the Earth.* And ſome Divines are ready to think, 'tis in this Senſe he is called

the

the *firſt-born of every Creature*, Col. 1. 15. becauſe he is Heir and Lord of all the Creation. And ſome join his Exaltation together with his Reſurrection in that Prophecy, *Pſal.* 2. 7. *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; becauſe 'tis the chief Senſe in which the Words of the *ſecond* or of the *eighty-ninth Pſalm*, now cited, could literally be applied to *David* in the Day of his being raiſed from the Earth and Obſcurity, unto a Throne: Now *David* in this his Exaltation to the Kingdom of *Iſrael* was a Type of *Chriſt*, and was ſaid to be *the Son of God begotten that day*, as a proper Type and Figure of our bleſſed Saviour.

But whatever may be the prophetical Senſe of thoſe Words of the Pſalmiſt, 'tis certain that the Name *Son of God* cannot directly and chiefly ſignify his *Reſurrection and future Exaltation* in all thoſe Places of the Goſpels, where the Belief of it is made the Term of Salvation.

(1.) Becauſe he is very often called the *Son of God*, long before his Death, Reſurrection, and Exaltation, to deſcribe the Perſon who was to be thus raiſed and exalted. He is called by the Apoſtle *John, the only begotten of the Father, who lay in the Boſom of the Father*, John 1. 14, 18. and *Paul* calls him *God's own Son, who was delivered up to Death for us.* Rom 8. 32. as a Name that belonged to him long before his Death, or indeed

indeed before his Birth into this World: For when he was firſt ſent into the World he was then the *Son of God*, John 3. 16, 17. and 11. 27. and as ſuch he was *appointed the Heir of all things*, Heb. 1. 2.

(2.) This Title the *Son of God* in thoſe Texts of the Goſpel does not depend upon his *Reſurrection and Exaltation*, becauſe the *Jews* were required to believe him to be the *Son of God* long before his Death and Reſurrection. Nor did *Chriſt* himſelf in plain Language openly and publickly preach his own Death and Reſurrection to the Multitudes. Therefore the Belief of *Chriſt* to be the *Son of God* in this Senſe of the Words could not in his Life-time be made neceſſary to Salvation.

(3.) And let it be noted further, that at this time even the Apoſtles themſelves, who were true Believers in the *Son of God* did not know that he was to die and to riſe again, for *Peter began to rebuke him*, when he ſpoke of his own dying, *Mark* 8. 32. *And they knew not what Riſing from the Dead ſhould mean.* Mark 9. 10. yet they all believed him to be the *Son of God.*

(4.) I might add, that it is abundantly evident from Scripture that he was the *Son of God*, before he died or roſe again, becauſe he was only *proclaimed* or *declared to be his Son* by his Reſurrection and Exaltation: The Apoſtle *Paul* explains it thus, *Rom.* 1. 4. *He was declared to be the Son of God with Power, by his Reſurrection from the Dead.* Nor

Nor is it any wonder that *Chriſt* in ſome Scriptures ſhould be repreſented as born or begotten of God at his Reſurrection, ſince 'tis the way of the ſacred Writers ſometimes to repreſent a thing to be tranſacted or done in that Day when 'tis *publiſhed* or *proclaimed*; and upon this account *Chriſt* may be ſaid to be *born* or to be *begotten*, or to be *made the firſt-born of God*, in the Day of his Reſurrection and Exaltation, becauſe he was then proclaimed and publiſhed to be the *Son of God*; even as a King may be ſaid to be *made* that Day when he is *proclaimed* or *crowned*.

V. The laſt Senſe in which *Chriſt* is called the *Son of God*, is to ſignify that *glorious Perſon who was appointed to be the Meſſiah, the anointed Saviour who was derived from God, and did bear ſome very near and extraordinary Relation to God above all other Perſons*; and therefore he is called *his Son, his own Son, his only begotten Son, his beloved Son*. And ſince the ſeveral other Senſes cannot be admitted to be the preciſe Idea and common Meaning of the Name *Son of God* in the New Teſtament, I take this to be the true Idea of it, as it is generally uſed in the New Teſtament, and eſpecially in thoſe Scriptures where the Belief or Profeſſion of it is made neceſſary in order to the Salvation of Men in the Writings of the Apoſtles.

It includes ſome ſpecial and glorious Relation to God; but whether that Relation belongs to his Fleſh, or his human Soul, or his Divine Nature, or to all theſe, is not ſo directly determined in thoſe Texts, becauſe the chief Deſign of them is but to point out the Perſon and Character of the *Meſſiah*.

Now let us conſider the Reaſons to prove this to be the true Senſe of the Name.

That the Name *Son of God* doth originally reſpect the Glory and Excellency of his Perſon, and his near Relation and Reſemblance to God, appears from the uſe of the word *Son* and *Son of God* in other Places of Scripture.

Son or *Daughter* or *Child* in the *Hebrew* Tongue implies eminently two things. (1.) It notes ſome *Derivation* of one thing from another. *Men* are frequently called *Sons of Men*. *Iſraelites* are called the Sons or *Children of Iſrael*. So *Sparks* are called the *Sons of the burning Coal*, Job 5. 7. to ſignify the Derivation of one from the other.

(2.) It is alſo an Idiom of the *Hebrew* Language, and a peculiar way of ſpeaking much in uſe among the *Jews*, to call one Perſon *the Son* of any other Thing or Perſon whoſe *Quality and Likeneſs* he bears. So wicked Men are called the *Sons of Belial*, or Wickedneſs, 2 *Sam.* 23. 6. So young Men that were inſtructed and prepared for the Gift of Prophecy

are called the *Sons of the Prophets*, 2 *Kings* 2. 3, 5, 7. Proud Men are named the *Children of Pride*, Job 41. 34. *Child of the Devil*, ſignifies a very wicked Man, one a-kin to the Devil in Malice and Subtilty, *&c. Acts* 13. 10. So the word *Sons of God* ſignifies Perſons who in a peculiar Manner were derived from God, and had ſome Reſemblance of him.

Adam was called the *Son of God*, Luke 3. *ult.* becauſe he was formed in the Image of God, and in an immediate manner derived his Being from God without human Generation.

Angels are called *Sons of God*, Job 1. 6. & 2. 1. & 38. 7. becauſe they are glorious and excellent Beings, with ſpiritual Powers and Perfections, in ſome meaſure like to God, and were the chief Rank of his Creatures, and not derived from each other by ſucceſſive Generations, but all created immediately by God himſelf.

Saints are called *Sons of God* in *John* 1. 12. and many other Places, both becauſe they are like God, or *created a-new after his Image in Knowledge, Righteouſneſs and Holineſs*, Col. 3. 10. Eph. 4. 24. and becauſe they are ſaid to be *new created*, or *begotten* and *born of God*, John 1. 13. & 1 John 5. 1.

Magiſtrates are called *Gods*, and *Sons of the moſt High*, Pſal. 82. 6. partly to denote that they are raiſed by God to that Dignity; (ſo *David* in the Letter and Type was the

Son

Son of God, Pſal. 2. 7. and was made *God's firſt-born*, Pſal. 89. 26, 27. as a Type of Chriſt;) and partly alſo to denote that in their Authority and Majeſty they reſemble God the ſupreme Magiſtrate and Ruler.

The *Son of God* who was with the three Children in the fiery Furnace, *Dan.* 3. 25. is ſo called, to ſignify a glorious and excellent Being, that had ſomething Divine or God-like in him; for this is the Expreſſion of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who is not ſuppoſed to know any thing of *Chriſt* or the *Meſſiah*.

Now 'tis evident that our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* is the *Son of God*, in a Senſe ſuperior to Men and Angels, for he is called *God's own Son*, Rom. 8. 32. *his only begotten Son*, John 1. 14, 18. and his *Firſt-born, the Image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every Creature*, &c. Col. 1. 15, 16. *The Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, made ſo much better than Angels, and has obtained a more excellent Name than they*, Heb. 1. 4. *For in all things he muſt have the Pre-eminence*, Col. 1. 18. Theſe ſcriptural Expreſſions plainly imply both *Derivation* and *Reſemblance*.

Yet here I aſk leave to inſert one Caution, and that is, Tho' 'tis ſufficiently manifeſt from the New Teſtament, and eſpecially from *Heb.* 1. that *Chriſt* is the *Son of God* in a ſenſe far ſuperior to Angels, yet I am in doubt whether the Diſciples at firſt could have ſuch an Idea

of his Superiority to all Angels: Perhaps their Idea of the *Son of God* aroſe no higher at firſt than to ſuppoſe him ſuperior to all their Prophets and Kings, who were called *Sons of God*, tho' afterwards it grew up to an Idea ſuperior to all the Angels of God.

But let us raiſe this Idea of the Name as high as we can ſuppoſe any of the Diſciples had attained before the Death of *Chriſt*, or as high as could be requiſite in order to Salvation in that Day, and I think it muſt be granted that this Name *Son of God* (ſo far as it denotes the *Nature of Chriſt* diſtinct from his *Offices*) can neceſſarily be conſtrued to riſe no higher than to denote ſome peculiar and glorious Likeneſs to God, ſome more near and excellent Relation to God the Father, or ſome ſpecial Derivation from him, ſome divine Character more eminent than belongs to *Men* or *Angels* when they are called the *Sons of God*, without any preciſe Determination wherein this peculiar Relation to God conſiſted.

Now to proceed:

This *Glory and Excellency of the Perſon of Chriſt*, which is originally denoted by the Name *Son of God*, is part of his Qualification for the Office of the *Meſſiah*, part of the Foundation of his Office, and what made him a proper Perſon to undertake, ſuſtain and fulfil it.

Yet this *Excellency of his Perſon*, this *Likeneſs and Nearneſs to God*, is not the compleat

compleat Senſe and Meaning of the word *Son of God* in thoſe fore-cited Texts of the Goſpel; but it includes alſo a *Deſignation to his Office*, viz. that glorious Perſon of extraordinary Nearneſs and Likeneſs to God, who was ordained to be the Saviour of Men: And tho' the Name *Son of God* ſignifies and includes both theſe, yet ſometimes the Scripture in uſing this Name ſeems to have a more ſpecial Regard to the *Excellency of his Perſon*, and ſometimes to *his Office*, and perhaps for this Reaſon, that a Belief of his *Sonſhip* in one of thoſe Senſes, but eſpecially the latter, in that Day might be a ſufficient Ground for the Faith and Hope of Sinners.

1. It may ſeem to have ſome ſpecial regard to the *Excellency of his Perſon*, where it is joined by way of Expoſition to the word *Meſſiah* or *Chriſt*, as a further Deſcription of the Perſon who ſuſtained that Office; as in theſe Scriptures, *viz.* *Mat.* 26. 63. the High-Prieſt adjured *Jeſus* to a Confeſſion, and ſaid, *Tell us whether thou be the Chriſt, the Son of God?* Mat. 16. 16. *Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art Chriſt*, or Meſſiah, *the Son of the living God.* John 11. 27. *Martha* confeſſed, *Lord, I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God.* Which Expreſſions mean thus much, Thou art the *Chriſt* or *Meſſiah*, that glorious Perſon of peculiar Relation to God who was ordained to this Office.

It ſeems alſo to ſignify more ſpecially the *Excellency of his Perſon* in thoſe Scriptures where he is called *God's own Son, God's only Son, God's only begotten Son, his beloved Son, his firſt-born,* &c. becauſe theſe are Words of Relation and peculiar Indearment, and we cannot well ſay *the only-begotten Meſſiah, the firſt-born Meſſiah.*

2. Yet there are many other Places wherein the Name *Son of God* ſeems to have a more ſpecial regard to his *Office* as the *appointed Saviour,* tho' it is incluſive alſo of the peculiar *Excellency of his Perſon,* which makes him fit for his Office. *John* 10. 37. *Do you ſay of him whom the Father hath ſanctified and ſent, thou blaſphemeſt, becauſe I ſaid I am the Son of God?* His being thus ſanctified and ſent by the Father is ſufficient to give this Name.

This is evident alſo where the word *Chriſt* or *Meſſiah* is not joined with it, and yet the Deſign of the Expreſſion ſeems to be entirely the ſame as if the word *Chriſt* or *Meſſiah* had been uſed there; as *John* 1. 34. *John the Baptiſt* ſaw and *bare witneſs that this is the Son of God,* i. e. this is the great promiſed Saviour. So ℣. 49. *Nathanael ſaid, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael,* i. e. thou art the Meſſiah, the King. So *John* 9. 35. *Jeſus* aſked the blind Man who was healed, *Doſt thou believe on the Son of God?* i. e. Doſt thou believe on

on the *Meſſiah*, the appointed Saviour? for as ſuch he was the proper Object of Belief. So 1 *John* 4. 15. *Whoſo ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* i. e. He that confeſſes him to be the glorious appointed *Meſſiah*, and receives him as ſuch, *he dwelleth in or with God.* The ſame is the Senſe of that Word 1 *John* 5. 5. *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jeſus is the Son of God*, i. e. the *Meſſiah*. And *v.* 20. *We know the Son of God is come*; i. e. the glorious Perſon who was ordained to be the *Meſſiah* is come into the World.

As in theſe Places where the word *Chriſt* or *Meſſiah* is not mentioned, *Son of God* ſignifies more directly the *Meſſiah* or appointed Saviour, ſo there are other Places wherein the word *Chriſt* is joined with it, where *Son of God* hath the ſame Signification, and intends chiefly the Office of the *Meſſiah* or *Saviour*; becauſe in thoſe Texts the word *Chriſt* doth not properly ſignify a *Character* or *Office*, but the *proper Name* or *Surname* of the Man *Jeſus*, who was generally ſo called after his Reſurrection †. The Eunuch's Confeſſion muſt have this Senſe, *Acts* 8. 37. *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.*

† This is a common thing in our Nation and Language, where the Surname of a Man and of his Family is *Smith*, *Taylor*, *Clark*, *Dyer*, *Steward*, &c. being drawn originally from the Trade, Office or Employment which perhaps the firſt of the Family enjoyed or practiſed.

i. e. This Man named *Jeſus Chriſt* is the promiſed and appointed Saviour.

And in this ſame Senſe did St. *Paul preach Chriſt in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God*, Acts 9. 20. *i. e.* That the Man *Jeſus Chriſt* is the promiſed Saviour. For the grand Queſtion of that Day was not whether *Jeſus* were eternally begotten of the Father, nor whether he was the true and eternal God himſelf, nor whether he were formed in an extraordinary and miraculous Manner as to his Soul or his Body, but *whether he was the promiſed Meſſiah and Saviour of the World?*

And if we conſult the Writings of the New Teſtament, eſpecially the Goſpel and Epiſtles of St. *John*, we ſhall find the Name *Son of God*, and the Name *Chriſt* (which in *Hebrew* is *Meſſiah*) uſed very promiſcuouſly for one another, and ſometimes with a deſign to explain each other, and both to denote the *great promiſed Redeemer, the Saviour of the World.* This will appear, if we read the following Verſes, *John* 11. 27. *Martha* confeſſes, *I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the World.* 1 John 4. 14, 15. *And we have ſeen and do teſtify, that the Father ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* 1 John 5. 1. *Whoſoever believes that Jeſus is the Chriſt,*

Chriſt, is born of God. And a little after, *He that is born of God overcometh the World.* And then, *Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believes that Jeſus is the Son of God?* 1 John 2. 22. *Who is a Lyar but he that denieth that Jeſus is the Chriſt? He is Anti-chriſt that denieth the Father and the Son. Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father.* And that awful Text *John* 8. 24. is certainly to be interpreted the ſame way, *If ye believe not that I AM HE, ye ſhall die in your Sins.* That is, as *Chriſt* himſelf explains it in the next Verſe, that I am *the ſame that I ſaid unto you from the Beginning*; that is, the *Chriſt*, the *Meſſiah*, the *Son of God*, the *Saviour of the World.* Nor is the Abſence of the word HE in the *Greek* any Bar to this Interpretation, for the Expreſſion is the ſame, *John* 4. 29. ἐγὼ εἰμι, and *John* 9. 37. ἐκεῖνος ἐστι, where we are ſure that *Chriſt* means that *he is the Meſſiah.*

It is well known that the *Jews* generally, and very juſtly, believed the Perſon who was to be their *Meſſiah* and Saviour was to bear ſome very extraordinary Relation to God, and to be *his Son* in a ſublime and uncommon way and manner, tho' what particular *ſort of Sonſhip* it was, they could have but very dark and confuſed Ideas; yet they uſed the word *Son of God* emphatically to denote this glorious Perſon: And the common Purpoſe for which

which they uſed it, was to ſignify this *great promiſed Deliverer.*

Now 'tis very eaſy to account for this, *viz.* that the *Son of God,* which originally ſignifies a *glorious Perſon near a-kin to God,* might in common uſe come to ſignify *his Office,* or the *appointed King* and *Saviour of his People,* juſt as the Name *Cæſar* was originally the Surname of a Family, but afterwards came to ſignify an *Office,* and to denote the *Emperor:* and perhaps the ſame might be ſaid of the Name *Abimelech* King of *Philiſtia,* or *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt.* So the word *Iſrael* at firſt was a Name given to *Jacob,* thence it was derived to ſignify *all the* Jewiſh *Family or Nation,* and afterwards it came to ſignify the *Character* of that Family, *viz. the Church of God*; and ſo 'tis uſed in *Gal. 6. 16. Peace be on the Iſrael of God.*

Thus I have gone over the ſeveral Senſes of the Name *Son of God,* and there is the greateſt Reaſon to believe that it moſt uſually and directly ſignifies that *Perſon who has in general ſome peculiar and ſublime Relation and Likeneſs to God, and is appointed to be the Meſſiah or Saviour of Men.*

Sect. II. *Other Arguments to confirm this Senſe of the Name* Son of God.

THE next Argument I ſhall produce for this Senſe of the Name, is this: 'Tis moſt reaſonable

reaſonable to ſuppoſe that *Son of God* ſignifies the *Office of the Meſſiah*, together with a Connotation of his *peculiar Relation to God*, or his *being born of God in ſome eminent and tranſcendent manner*, becauſe the other Name of Chriſt *Son of Man* ſignifies the ſame *Office of the Meſſiah*, together with a Connotation of his *being born of Mankind*, or *his Relation to Man in ſome Way of Eminence.*

That the Name *Son of Man* may properly denote the *Meſſiah*, there are ſome Hints given in the *Old Teſtament*. I will mention four Places.

I. The very firſt Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* calls him the *Seed of the Woman*, who was appointed to *break the Head of the Serpent*, Gen. 3. 15. *i. e.* one derived from Mankind, or a *Son of Man*; which is interpreted, 1 *John.* 3. 8. The *Son of God was manifeſted that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil.* The *Meſſiah* was to be the *Son of God* and the *Son of Man*, to undertake this glorious Service.

II. See *Pſal.* 8. 4. *What is Man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man that thou viſiteſt him? Thou madeſt him a little lower than the Angels*, &c. which is interpreted concerning *Jeſus* the promiſed *Meſſiah*, Heb. 2. 9. and ſo the literal and typical Senſe of the Pſalmiſt is this: What is the *firſt Adam*, with all his Seed, that thou art mindful

mindful of him? or what is the *ſecond Adam* that thou viſiteſt him? *&c.* ſince he is made a little lower than the Angels by his coming into the Fleſh, and becoming a *ſecond Adam.*

III. Read *Pſal.* 80. 17. *Let thy Hand be upon the Man of thy right Hand, upon the Son of Man whom thou madeſt ſtrong for thy ſelf.* Whether this refers to the hard Work of Atonement, which the *Hand of God* would lay upon him, or whether it means the *Hand of God* ſhall be with him, to ſupport and eſtabliſh him in his Kingdom, may be doubted: Yet 'tis generally agreed, that the Perſon here deſigned, is the promiſed *Meſſiah*, that *Holy*, that *Mighty One*, upon whom God devolved the Care of our Salvation, *Pſal.* 89. 19. when he ſays, *I have laid Help upon one that is mighty, I have exalted one choſen out of the People*; i. e. one who is to be eminently the *Son of Man*, choſen out of Mankind.

IV. Look into *Dan.* 7. 13. *I ſaw in the Night Viſions, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days——and there was given to him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom*, &c. which repreſents in Prophecy, *Chriſt's* Aſcenſion to Heaven in the Clouds, and his receiving the Kingdom from the Hands of the Father.

I grant that in ſome of theſe ancient Texts, the Deſign of Scripture is to repreſent this, that

that the *promiſed Meſſiah* was to have the Nature, Form and Faſhion of a Man, but ſtill his Character as *Meſſiah* is alſo included or declared in the ſame Text. And this is particularly remarkable in this Verſe of *Daniel*, which, as Dr. *Sykes* has abundantly ſhewn in his *Eſſay on the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion*, is always ſuppoſed to be in view whereſoever this Title is given to *Chriſt* in the *New Teſtament*.

This is the Name indeed, whereby *Chriſt* moſt frequently ſpeaks of himſelf in the *New Teſtament*, and (as ſome have remarked) that as the ſacred Writers generally call him the *Son of God* to expreſs his ſublime Relation to the Father, ſo he generally calls himſelf the *Son of Man*, to ſignify his condeſcending Relation to Mankind.

It may be ſaid concerning this Name *Son of Man* as is ſaid before concerning the Name *Son of God*, (*viz.*) As there are ſome few Places where the *Son of God*, chiefly denotes *his ſublime Relation to God* diſtinct from his Office; ſo there may be a place or two where the *Son of Man* chiefly ſignifies *Chriſt's Relation to human Nature*, and his *Derivation from Mankind*, diſtinct from his Office. Yet as the moſt general Senſe of the word *Son of God* is to denote *that eminent that peculiar Son of God who was to be the Meſſiah*, or *Saviour*; ſo the moſt general Senſe of the Word *Son of Man* is to denote that *eminent and peculiar*

culiar Son of Man who was the Seed of the Woman, and was appointed to that Office of a Saviour.

Firſt, I ſhall mention one Text (for I can think of but one in the *New Teſtament*) where the *Son of Man* may be ſuppoſed chiefly or only to ſignify *Chriſt's Relation to Mankind*, without including his Office or referring to it.

Matth. 16. 13. *Whom do Men ſay that I, the Son of Man, am?* i. e. Whom do Men ſay that I *Jeſus* am, who appear in the common Form of Mankind? and ℣. 16. *Peter gave his Opinion, Thou art Chriſt the Son of the Living God;* i. e. Thou art the *Meſſiah*, who haſt a ſublime and glorious Relation to God, who art by way of Eminence *God's own Son.*

Yet even this Text may be alſo explained ſo as to include the *Meſſiahſhip*, or the Office of *Chriſt* thus, " *Whom do Men ſay that I* " *am?* What do Men think concerning me, " who am indeed the great *Son of Man*, " the *Meſſiah* who was to come?" What do they think of my Perſon, who am the *Meſſiah* by Office?

But in the next place let it be obſerved, that there are a multitude of Scriptures wherein this word is plainly and certainly uſed to ſignify *that eminent Son of Man*, who is the *promiſed Meſſiah.* I ſhall mention only theſe *four*, wherein it is evident that the Scripture hath

hath chief Reſpect to his *Office*; and where the meer Signification of his *human Nature* cannot anſwer the End and Deſign of the Text.

I. *Mark* 9. 12. *Elias verily cometh firſt and reſtoreth all things*, &c. *And it is written of the Son of Man, that he muſt ſuffer many things and be ſet at nought*; which refers to the Prophecies of *Iſaiah*, *David* and *Daniel* concerning the *Meſſiah*. *Iſa.* 53. *Dan.* 9. and *Pſa.* 22.

II. *Luke* 17. 22. *The Days will come, when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of the Days of the Son of Man, and ye ſhall not ſee it; and they ſhall ſay to you, See here, or ſee there; Go not after them, nor follow them.* Which is parallel to *Matth.* 24. 23. *If any Man ſhall ſay to you, Lo here is Chriſt*, or there, *believe it not; for there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts*, &c. Then it follows both in *Luke* and *Matthew*, *As the Lightning cometh*, &c. *ſo ſhall the coming of the Son of Man be; and as it was in the Days of Noah, and* (*Luke* adds alſo) *in the Days of Lot, thus ſhall it be in the Day when the Son of Man is revealed*: i. e. when *Jeſus* ſhall appear as the *Meſſiah* for the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, or for the Deſtruction of the *Jews*, or for the final Judgment of the *World*.

III. *John* 5. 26, 27. *As the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have Life in himſelf, and hath given him Autho-*

Authority to execute Judgment alſo, becauſe he is the Son of Man: that is, becauſe he is the *Meſſiah*; therefore, in order to ſuſtain and fulfil the Character of *Meſſiah*, 'twas neceſſary that he ſhould have Power to give Life to the Dead, and to execute Judgment on the World.

IV. *John* 12. 34. *The People anſwered him, We have heard out of the Law, that Chriſt* [or the Meſſiah] *abideth for ever: and how ſayſt thou, The Son of Man muſt be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?* 'Tis as much as if the People had ſaid, We know of no *Son of Man* beſides that *Meſſiah* or the *Chriſt*, who is to have a glorious Kingdom, and abide for ever: What other *Son of Man* is there, or can there be, that muſt be lifted up or put to death? Is there any other *Chriſt* or *Meſſiah* beſides him who is to *abide for ever?*

I might cite ſeveral Scriptures more to this Purpoſe, but theſe are ſufficient to ſhew, that as the *Meſſiah* is ſometimes called the SON OF MAN, to ſignify *his Office with a Connotation of his Relation to Mankind*, and being in an eminent Senſe *the Seed of the Woman*, or the *Son of Man*, the chief of all the *Sons of Men*; ſo 'tis exceeding probable that he is alſo called the SON OF GOD, to ſignify the *ſame Office*, and withal to ſhew his ſublime *Relation to God*, or his being in a peculiar and tranſcendent manner THE SON, by way of abſolute Eminence, above all Men or Angels who are *Sons of God*; even his *firſt-born*, his *only begotten Son.* *Obj.*

Obj. But if it be allowed, that there are any Places of Scripture where the Name *Son of Man* denotes the *human Nature of Chriſt*, or that he was *really and truly Man*, why may not the Name *Son of God* as well ſignify *his Divine Nature*, and denote that he is *true and real God?*

To which *I anſwer*, that the Caſe is widely different; for the Name *Son of Man* is never applied to any Perſon who is not *true and real Man*; and the Scripture applying it abſolutely and eminently to *Chriſt*, ſhews him to be the *chief of the Sons of Men:* But the Name *Son of God* is applied often in the *Old Teſtament*, and in the *New*, both to *Angels* and to *Men*, who are called the *Sons of God*, and yet they are not *true and real God*; and therefore when this Name is given abſolutely and eminently to *Chriſt*, it can neceſſarily be conſtrued to ſignify no more, than the *moſt eminent and chief of all who are called the Sons of God*, or *one who is above them all*, in Character and Office.

It may be obſerved alſo, that the Name *Son of Man* or *Sons of Men* is given ſometimes to any of the Children of *Adam* or the Race of Mankind, and at other times to ſome eminent Perſon among Men, as *Ezechiel* the Prophet is often ſpoken to, *Thou Son of Man*; but the Name is much more abundantly attributed to our bleſſed Saviour, as he is the moſt eminent of all that ever had that Appellation given them.

I acknowledge it is a great Truth, that this glorious Perſon the *Meſſiah* hath two diſtinct Natures united in him, even the *Nature of God* and the *Nature of Man:* and that *Chriſt* is *true God* and *true Man.* But when he calls himſelf *Son of God* and *Son of Man,* ſurely an *eternal and conſubſtantial Sonſhip of Chriſt,* or even *his eternal Deity united to Man,* ſeems more than could be certainly collected from theſe Names in that Day, and more than *Chriſt* himſelf directly deſigned by the uſe of thoſe Words.

The *laſt Argument* that I ſhall mention to prove that the Name *Son of God* denotes the *Character of the Meſſiah,* including alſo his *divine Original and ſublime Relation to God,* which renders him an all-ſufficient Saviour, is this, That Salvation is annexed to the Belief of *Jeſus being the Son of God,* in ſeveral Texts which I have cited at the beginning of this Diſcourſe: This *Sonſhip* therefore muſt neceſſarily ſignify and carry with it ſome Ideas, or Characters that are directly ſuited to the ſinful and miſerable State of Mankind, and that render him *a proper Object for their Deſire, Dependance and Hope.*

Now 'tis not the meer Belief of his having a divine Nature, nor of an eternal Generation by God the Father, nor of his having a moſt glorious human Soul, nor a miraculous Birth, nor a Reſurrection from the Dead, that renders him ſo directly ſuitable to the State

State and Caſe of convinced Sinners, and fit for the proper Exerciſes of their Hope and Dependance, as the various *Offices and Characters* which he ſuſtains as the *Meſſiah*, the *Saviour of Mankind*, together with his *all-ſufficient Capacity* to fulfil thoſe Offices.

A poor convinced periſhing Sinner beholds him as a glorious Perſon near to God, appointed to be a *Prophet* to enlighten his Darkneſs, a *Prieſt* to atone for his Sins and intercede for him, a *King* to rule and influence and defend him againſt all the Powers of Sin and Hell, and all-ſufficient for theſe ſacred Purpoſes: And thence I infer, that a *divine Perſon who is the promiſed Meſſiah, the all-ſufficient Saviour*, is the moſt natural and probable Senſe of this Title, the Son of God, in all thoſe Places of Scripture where *Chriſt* is propoſed to our Faith under this Name; however ſome of the other Senſes may be more remotely and indeterminately included therein. And tho' the *Deity of Chriſt* is not directly ſignify'd by this Name, yet by a Compariſon of it with other Places of Scripture, I think it may certainly be deduced by juſt Conſequences; for 'tis ſufficiently manifeſt to us, who have the whole *New Teſtament* to compare with the *Old*, that the *Meſſiah* muſt be the *true God*, or that Godhead muſt be united to human Nature, to make up the complete Perſon and Character of the *Meſſiah*.

SECT. III. *Objections againſt this Senſe of the Name anſwered.*

Obj. 1. THE word *Son* among Men properly ſignifies one of the ſame Nature with the *Father*; and therefore *Son of God*, when 'tis applied to *Chriſt*, muſt ſignify one of the ſame Nature with God the Father, *i. e.* one who is true and eternal God; and it has been generally ſo taken in this Controverſy by our Divines. Now this Senſe implies much more than a mere *Likeneſs to God*, or a *Derivation from him*, or *Deputation to an Office*.

Anſw. 1. The word *Son* taken in its common Senſes and Uſes among Men may be applied to ſeveral Ideas, *viz.* a *Derivation from the Father*, a *Likeneſs to*, or *Imitation of the Father*, a *Subordination*, or ſome ſort of *inferior Relation to the Father*, or a *Being of the ſame Species, Kind or Nature with the Father, and an individual Being diſtinct from the Father*.

Now 'tis plain that when *human Words* and *Similes* are uſed to repreſent *Divine Things*, there is no Neceſſity that thoſe Words ſhould include all their original Ideas, nor indeed is it poſſible: 'Tis enough to ſupport the Analogy, if but one or two of the ſame Ideas are denoted by the uſe of the ſame Word. Why may we not then ſuppoſe that the

the Name *Son of God*, when applied to *Chriſt*, may ſignify his *peculiar Derivation from the Father as to his Soul, or as to his Body*, or his *ſubordinate Character in his Miſſion by the Father*, or his being *appointed by the Father to be his Vicegerent in the Kingdom*, or his *Likeneſs to the Father* in his natural Qualifications and Powers, or in his kingly Office, together with his being *another Individual diſtinct from the Father?* Why may not one or two of theſe Ideas, and much more all of them, be ſufficient to account for the Uſe of this Name *Son of God*, without making it neceſſary that the Word *Sonſhip* in this Place muſt include a *Sameneſs of Nature?*

Beſides, it is evident that the word *Son of God* is applied to *Angels*, *Job* 1. 6. and to *Men*, *Phil.* 2. 15. 1 *John* 3. 1, 2. and even the Term of *begotten Son* is applied to *Men*, 1 *John* 5. 1. Yet neither Men nor Angels are of the ſame *Kind* or *Nature* with God their Father, and in theſe Inſtances 'tis impoſſible that the Idea of *Sameneſs of Kind or Nature* ſhould be included.

Anſw. 2. The word *Son* in the Language of Men, whereſoever it means a *Sameneſs of Nature*, it always means the *ſame ſpecific Nature*, or a Nature of the ſame *Kind* and *Species*; but it never means the *ſame individual* Nature, for it always denotes a *diſtinct individual Being*. Therefore, in order to

keep this part of the Idea of *Sonſhip*, and to maintain the Parallel in this Point, if we will have the *Son of God* to ſignify one of the *ſame Nature with the Father*, it muſt mean one of the *ſame ſpecific* Nature, that is, a *diſtinct individual Being of the ſame kind with the Father*; and thus we ſhall be in danger of making two Gods *. But it is plain, that in order to ſupport the Analogy of the Name *Son*, we can never make the word *Son of God* to ſignify one of the *ſame individual Nature or Eſſence*, becauſe it never ſignifies ſo in the Language of Men; and therefore there is no Neceſſity that it ſhould ſignify one of the *ſame Nature* in any Senſe when applied to *Chriſt*.

Anſw. 3. There are many places of Scripture wherein Chriſt is called the *Son of God*, and *the Son* abſolutely, and where God is ſaid to be *his Father*, wherein we cannot ſuppoſe the *Godhead of Chriſt* is or can be deſigned in the moſt juſt and natural Interpretation of the Text; ſuch as are moſt of theſe which follow, *viz.*

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* That it cannot mean *one of the ſame ſpecific Nature*, and that *Chriſt* is not another individual Spirit *ſpecifically the ſame* with the Father, I have proved at large in other Places: For it belongs to the very Nature of a *Father* to be ſelf-exiſtent and underived, and it belongs as much to the Nature of a *Son* not to be ſelf-exiſtent, but to be derived: therefore their Natures cannot be ſpecifically the ſame. A Nature which is not ſelf-exiſtent and ſelf-ſufficient, nor could exiſt but by Derivation, is not the ſame ſpecifical Nature with that which is ſelf-ſufficient and ſelf-exiſtent, and which cannot be derived.

John 5. 18, 19. When the *Jews* had made a ſtrange Inference, and charged *Chriſt* with making *himſelf equal to God*, becauſe he *called God his Father, he anſwered, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do*, &c. This is not an Expreſſion which repreſents the Son as the true and eternal God, or that grants their Inference; for it is plain that this Expreſſion repreſents him under a Degree of Impotence and Dependence, that he could do nothing of himſelf. Nay this contradicts their Inference, and denies his Equality with God, rather than confirms or allows it.

The Senſe of this Expreſſion may be learn'd from *John* 8. 38. *I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my Father, and you do that which ye have ſeen with your Father.* ℣. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil*, &c.—— Now 'tis plain that the *Jews* had never ſeen the Devil do thoſe Things which they did, but it ſignifies only that by the Devil's Influence and Direction they practiſed evil Actions: And ſo alſo, that *Chriſt* doth all by God's Influence and Direction, is the plain Meaning of Chriſt's *ſpeaking or doing what he has ſeen with his Father.*

Nor will the following Words deſtroy this Interpretation, *Whatſoever things the Father doth, theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe*; that is, whatſoever things the Father contrives and

appoints, the Son executes and performs as commiſſioned by the Father, or the Son performs them by the Father's Influence.

Then it proceeds, ℣. 20. *The Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doth, and he will ſhew him greater Works than theſe, that ye may marvel.* Hence it follows that the Father had not then *ſhewn to the Son* theſe *greater Works*, or given him Commiſſion and Power for the Performance of them. But this can never be ſaid concerning the Divine Nature of *Chriſt*, which can receive and learn nothing new.

And tho' there are ſome Expreſſions in that Paragraph of Scripture down to the 30th ℣. which ſeem ſuperior to the Character of any mere Creature, and which would have been hardly applied to *Chriſt* the Man, if not united to Godhead; yet *Chriſt* conſidered as the *Son of God* throughout that Paragraph, is repreſented as dependent on the Father for all, and receiving all from the Father, which is hardly conſiſtent with the Idea of ſupreme Godhead, if that were included in *Sonſhip*.

Whereſoever *Chriſt* calls God *his Father*, he himſelf ſtands under the ſpecial Character of a *Son*. Now *John* 5. 30. when he ſays, *I can of myſelf do nothing, I ſeek not mine own Will, but the Will of the Father which hath ſent me.* And *John* 6. 38. *I came down from Heaven not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me*; that is, *the*

the Father, as *v.* 39. This does not ſound like the Language of Godhead, which is ſupreme and independent, and can do all things of itſelf, and by its own Will.

John 14. 28. *My Father is greater than I.* 'Tis hardly to be ſuppoſed that *Chriſt* here intends to ſpeak of his Divine Nature. The Expreſſion itſelf, as well as the Context, would lead one to think that *Chriſt* conſidered as a *Son* is not here ſpoken of as the true and eternal God, who is the *greateſt* of Beings, and can acknowledge no greater than himſelf.

John 14. 31. *As the Father gave me Commandment, even ſo I do.* This does not ſeem to be the Language of ſupreme Godhead, which receives no Commandments from another.

John 17. 5. *Father, glorify me with thy ſelf, with the Glory which I had with Thee before the World was.* Surely *Chriſt* as God does not offer up Prayers to the Father, and much leſs could he pray for the Reſtoration of a Glory which his Divine Nature once had, of which he ſeems diveſted at preſent. All this is hardly conſiſtent with ſupreme Deity belonging to his *Sonſhip*, *i. e.* either to be diveſted of Glory, or to pray for the Reſtoration of it.

John 20. 17. *Chriſt* ſays, *I aſcend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.* So 2 *Cor.* 11. 31. and 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. the *Father* is called *the God and Father of our Lord*

Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Now the Father cannot properly be *the God of the Deity of Chriſt, i. e.* his Creator, his abſolute Governor, and his Object of Worſhip, which is the proper Senſe of *my God* in all other Scriptures. Nor is there any ſufficient Reaſon then why we ſhould conſtrue the Words *my Father*, as relating to the *Deity of Chriſt*, ſince the Words *my God* cannot be ſo conſtrued, and ſince both theſe Titles ſeem ſo intimately connected and referring to one and the ſame Subject.

Mark 13. 32. *Of that Day and Hour knoweth not the Son, but the Father.* I confeſs it may be ſaid in that Paragraph he is called *the Son* of Man, ℣. 26. yet it muſt be granted that the more natural Senſe of the Words is, *Of that Hour knoweth not the Son* of God, *but* only God *the Father.* This Text does ſo plainly ſhew *Chriſt's* Ignorance of the Day of Judgment as he is the Son, that tho' it be granted the *Divine Nature of Chriſt* knows the Day of Judgment, yet *as a Son* he does not: therefore *as a Son* he hath not a Divine Nature, or true Godhead.

John 3. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.* ℣. 34. *God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him.* All this implies an Inferiority and Dependency. As a Son he receives all from another, which Godhead cannot do.

Luke 23. 47. When the *Centurion* or Captain ſaw the Miracles at the Death of Chriſt, he

he *cried out, Verily this Man was the Son of God.* He cannot be ſuppoſed to mean that this Man was the true and eternal God, but only that he was a great and glorious Perſon, *like God,* or ſome way *related to God:* or he was the Perſon whom the *Jews* expected for their *Meſſiah.* This *Roman* Captain could not imagine *Chriſt* to be God himſelf.

1 *Cor.* 15. 28. *Then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject to him that has put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* This is a Character of too much Inferiority for true Godhead. The Argument ſtands thus: If the Son of God be *true God* conſidered as a Son, then he is originally and neceſſarily Lord of all, and then it muſt be ſaid 'tis by his own voluntary Condeſcenſion that he is ſo far *depreſſed* and *humbled by the Oeconomy,* as to become the Father's Deputy and Vicegerent; and when that Oeconomy ceaſes, he is of courſe exalted to his Equality with the Father, and to his eſſential and natural Lordſhip over all. But the Repreſentation of St. *Paul* is juſt the contrary: In many parts of his Writings (particularly *Phil.* 2.) he ſhews us, that the *Son of God is* not *depreſt* but *exalted by the Oeconomy to the Kingdom.* And he tells us in this Text, that when the Son gives up this Oeconomical Kingdom, he comes again into Subjection; *Then ſhall the Son himſelf be ſubject to the Father;* which plainly ſhews, that conſidered as a *Son,* he is naturally ſub-

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ject to the *Father*, and that at the end of this œconomical Exaltation he ſhall return to his natural Subjection, and ſhall be ſo for ever when *God* appears *all in all*. This is moſt evidently the meaning of the great Apoſtle.

This Text will not prove that *Chriſt* is not God, for he is ſo by perſonal Union to the Divine Nature, he is *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, he is God and Man in one complex Perſon. But this Text (I think) does prove that his *Sonſhip* doth not include *Godhead*. And not only in this Text, but in moſt or all theſe Scriptures it is manifeſt, that the Character of *Chriſt* as a *Son* is ſet far below the *Father*, not only in Order or in Office, but in Knowledge, Power, Sovereignty, Self-ſufficiency and Authority; which would naturally lead one to believe that his *Sonſhip* in Scripture cannot refer to his *Godhead* or *Divine Nature*, wherein he is by our greateſt Divines acknowledged to be *equal* to the Father *in Power and Glory*.

Now while we maintain the true *Deity of Chriſt*, and that his compleat Perſon is God and Man united; I ſee no Neceſſity of applying all theſe Texts to his *Godhead* where his *Sonſhip* is ſpoken of, ſince his *Sonſhip* may be better referred to his inferior Nature, or to his Offices. And this will free us from thoſe Embaraſſments and Hardſhips to which we have been driven to keep up the ſublime Idea of Godhead in theſe Scriptures which call him a *Son*, and which at the ſame time carry ſo much

much of *Dependance* and *Inferiority* in them.

Obj. II. Tho' it ſhould be granted that there are ſeveral Texts wherein *Chriſt* is called the *Son of God*, which cannot ſo well be referred to his Divine Nature, yet there are ſeveral other Texts wherein *Chriſt* is repreſented as the *Son of God*, *begotten* and *born of God*, which ſeem much more naturally to refer to his Godhead, and can hardly be conſtrued into a lower Senſe, *viz.*

1*ſt Text*, *Prov.* 8. 24, 25. Where *Wiſdom ſays*, *Before the Hills was*, *I brought forth*, &c. which whole Chapter is generally interpreted concerning the Divine Nature of *Chriſt*.

Anſw. 1. 'Tis not the Deſign of my preſent Diſcourſe to prove that the divine Nature of *Chriſt* has no ſort or manner of Derivation from the Father, real or relative: I neither affirm it nor deny it here. But that the Name *Son of God*, in the *New Teſtament*, does not generally (if ever) ſignify his divine Nature; this is my preſent Theme: and therefore the Allegation of this Text out of *Proverbs* is not to our preſent Purpoſe, nor is the Name *Son of God* there uſed, nor is God called *his Father*.

Anſw. 2. I dare not deny this Chapter to relate to *Chriſt*; yet it does not follow, that it refers only to his divine Nature, as I ſhall ſhew immediately. And it muſt be acknowledged

ledged that 'tis very hard to prove, that this 8th of *Proverbs* does certainly denote the Perſon of *Chriſt*. *Athanaſius* himſelf ſometimes explains it another way. Biſhop *Patrick*, that noble Commentator, will ſcarce allow it; and many others have been of the Opinion, that *Solomon* means only *Wiſdom* as a Principle of Contrivance and Counſel, whether human or divine; or at moſt, the ideal World in the Mind of God, tho' he uſes ſuch ſort of *perſonal* Characters in his Deſcription of this *Wiſdom*, in the *Hebrew* Idiom.

'Tis granted that many of the Ancients explained it of *Chriſt*, but ſome of the Fathers ſuppoſed it to mean the *Holy Spirit*; and all Men know they were but very poor Expoſitors, who dealt much in Allegory, and in ſtraining of plain Texts to their Purpoſes: and ſince they can't tell whether the *Son* or the *Spirit* be meant here, 'tis poſſible it may mean neither of them, by all the Arguments which they have produced; for none of them are very concluſive.

Anſw. 3. Suppoſing the divine *Wiſdom* in *Prov.* 8. primarily to ſignify the Idea of the divine Counſels and Decrees about Creation and Redemption, it may be properly ſaid, This *Wiſdom* was *begotten* or *brought forth* before the Creation, and all this Syſtem of divine Counſels being depoſited with the pre-exiſtent Soul of *Chriſt*, (*in whom are all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*,) this human

human Soul of *Chriſt*, thus veſted with divine Ideas, may be included in *Solomon*'s Idea of *Wiſdom*.

And thoſe who believe the Doctrine of the *pre-exiſtent Soul of Chriſt*, have made it appear that if it refer to Chriſt, it is very probable this *pre-exiſtent Soul* conſidered as having the *divine Nature united* to it, is here repreſented as commencing its Exiſtence, its Union with Godhead, receiving its Commiſſion, and beginning its Office. And the learned Dr. *Thomas Goodwin*, (tho' he firmly believed the eternal Generation of Chriſt, as the Son of God) yet he ſuppoſes this Chapter to relate to *Chriſt*, as *God Man*, and not meerly to his Godhead.

2d *Text*, is that remarkable one, *Pſal.* 2. 7. *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*; which has been uſually interpreted by our Divines, to ſignify the *eternal Sonſhip of Chriſt* as God.

Anſw. 1. 'Tis evident that in *Act.* 13.33. St. *Paul* applies this to the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, and the beginning of his Exaltation, and not to any eternal Generation; ſo that we have a divine Interpreter giving quite a different Senſe of it.

Anſw. 2. Beſides, *Chriſt* is here ſaid to *become a Son by a Decree* which cannot ſignify eternal Generation, but muſt relate to his Office.

Anſw. 3. Again, 'tis ſpoken *literally* concerning the Exaltation of *David* as the

Type

Type of *Chriſt* to his Kingdom, and not concerning the natural Production or Generation of *David*; and therefore in the *Antitype* it muſt ſignify *myſtically* the Exaltation of *Chriſt* to his Kingdom, and not his natural eternal Generation.

Anſw. 4. Let it be farther remembred that the word, *This Day*, never ſignifies *Eternity* in Scripture in any other Place, and why then muſt it do ſo here?

Anſw. 5. I add alſo, that this Text is cited in *Heb.* 1. 5. where it is joined with God's Promiſe in future times *to be a Father to Chriſt; I will be to him a Father, and he ſhall be to me a Son*; which does not ſignify eternal Generation. But of this Verſe I have ſpoken more largely in other Places; and ſhewn that Biſhop *Pearſon*, Dr. *Owen*, and other zealous Trinitarians do not conſtrue this Text to mean the eternal Generation of Chriſt.

3d *Text*, Matth. 28. 19. *Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt.* Why is the *Son* joined with the *Father* and the *Holy Ghoſt*, who are confeſſedly divine, if the Name *Son* does not include the Godhead of *Chriſt?*

Anſw. If *Chriſt*, conſidered as the *Son of God*, be perſonally united to the divine Nature, or the *Eternal Word*, he has Godhead belonging to his complex Perſon; and therefore the Name *Son*, which ſignifies his perſonal Character and Office, may be well joined with

with the Father in this initiating Ordinance, the whole complex Perſon of Chriſt, who is the *Son of God*, including true Godhead.

4th *Text*, Rom. 1. 3, 4. *His Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, which was made of the Seed of David, according to the Fleſh, and declared to be the Son of God with Power, according to the Spirit of Holineſs by the Reſurrection from the Dead.* Now ſome ſay, here is a plain *Antitheſis* between the human Nature and divine Nature of *Chriſt:* the human Nature, which is called the *Fleſh*, and the divine Nature, which is called the *Spirit of Holineſs*, and *according to this* divine Nature *he is declared to be the Son of God.*

Anſw. 1. There are ſeveral Criticks who believe the eternal Generation of Chriſt, who yet don't ſuppoſe there is ſuch an exact *Antitheſis* here; but they conſtrue the *Spirit of Holineſs*, to ſignify the *Holy Ghoſt* who raiſed *Chriſt* from the Dead, and who manifeſted, teſtified and declared him to be the *Son of God with Power by his Reſurrection.*

Anſw. 2. There are others who chuſe to ſupport the *Antitheſis*, and make the *Spirit of Holineſs* to ſignify the glorious human Spirit of Chriſt repleniſh'd with all Holineſs; and ſuppoſe that the Name *Spirit of Holineſs* is here given to this human Soul of Chriſt, not only to aggrandize its Character above all other holy Creatures, but alſo to intimate that this Spirit governed the animal Nature, and kept

it pure, as well as to diſtinguiſh it from the *Holy Spirit*, which is the third of the Sacred Three. But I am not ſo well ſatisfied in this Expoſition, and therefore I dare not venture to maintain it. But there is a third Anſwer, which I prefer to both theſe.

Anwſ. 3. This Text may be thus paraphras'd: *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who was derived from the Seed of David, according to* (*his fleſhly Original, or*) *the Influence of the Fleſh into his Birth, but was declared powerfully, by his Reſurrection from the Dead, to be the Son of God, according to* (*his ſupernatural and holy Original, or*) *the Influence of the Holy Spirit.* So that the *Fleſh* here, does not mean any conſtituent part of *Chriſt*, or his *very Fleſh or Body*, but the Operation or Influence of the Fleſh, or ſhare that Fleſh of the bleſſed Virgin had in the Conception of *Chriſt*: And ſo the Spirit does not mean *any conſtituent part of Chriſt*, but the Influence or Operation of the Holy Spirit in his firſt *Conception*, or in his *Reſurrection*, on both which accounts he is called in Scripture the *Son of God*. See *Luke* 1. 35. and *Act.* 13. 33. and both are aſcribed to the Holy Spirit. There is a large Confirmation of this Expoſition, in ſome Notes on *Rom.* 1. 3, 4. wherein it is ſhewn how the Antitheſis of the Apoſtle is preſerved, and that the Apoſtle always uſes κατὰ σάρκα and κατὰ πνεῦμα in an Antitheſis, to ſignify the Influence of

of each Principle, rather than for two conſtituent parts of a Perſon.

5th *Text*, Heb. 7. 3. *Melchiſedec* was *without Father, without Mother, without Deſcent, having neither beginning of Days, nor end of Life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a Prieſt continually.* Now this *hiſtorical* Eternity of *Melchiſedec*, whoſe Father and Mother, Life and Death are not recorded, is made a Type of the *real* Eternity of *Chriſt*, conſidered as he is the *Son of God.*

Anſw. 1. Since *Melchiſedec* is repreſented here *without a Father*, and yet as a Type of the *Son of God*, it would deſtroy the Doctrine of Chriſt's eternal Generation from God the Father, rather than ſupport it, ſince the very Type here has no Father.

Anſw. 2. This Place refers more naturally to the Prieſthood of Chriſt than to his Nature or Exiſtence. His Prieſthood was not derived by genealogical Succeſſion as *Aaron*'s was: He had no Father, no Mother of the *Levitical* Tribe, or of the Family of *Aaron*, from whom his Prieſthood could deſcend; nor did he die and leave it to others by way of Deſcent; but was conſtituted a ſingle Prieſt himſelf, without a Predeceſſor, without a Succeſſor: and herein the Prieſthood of *Melchiſedec* and the Prieſthood of *Chriſt* run very parallel, and greatly anſwer the Apoſtle's Deſign. And I think this Senſe is patroniz'd by ſome Expreſſions in Dr. *Owen*'s Comment.

6th *Text*, Heb. 1. 6. *When he bringeth in his firſt-begotten into the World, he ſaith, Let all the Angels of God worſhip him*; i. e. Let all the Angels of God worſhip the firſt-begotten; now this *firſt-begotten* is *Jehovah*, *Pſal.* 97. 7. for thence the Apoſtle cites it.

Anſw. This firſt-begotten Son of God has true and eternal Godhead perſonally dwelling in him, and united perſonally to him, and one with him; and therefore the whole complex Perſon is called *Jehovah*, and is entitled to divine Worſhip from Angels and Men. God united to the Man *Chriſt*: *God manifeſt in the Fleſh was ſeen* of Angels, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. and worſhipped by them. This Text does not prove that the firſt-begotten is God, any otherwiſe than by perſonal Union with that *Jehovah* who is ſpoken of in the 97th *Pſalm.* The firſt-begotten Son of God is to be worſhipped by Angels, becauſe of the indwelling Godhead, the great *Jehovah*, with whom the Man *Chriſt* is one.

The laſt *Text*, and which affords perhaps the moſt important Objection againſt my Senſe of the Name, is *John* 5. 18. compared with *John* 10. 23, *&c.* If the Title *Son of God* did not ſignify *true Godhead*, why did the *Jews* charge *Chriſt* with Blaſphemy, and ſay, that he *made himſelf equal with God*, and ſeek to kill him, becauſe he had ſaid, *God was his Father, his own Father*, and as they conſtrue it, *making himſelf equal with God?*

John

John 5. 18. And why do they charge him again with Blaſphemy, when he ſaid, *I am the Son of God?* John. 10. 33. *becauſe that thou being a Man, makeſt thyſelf God.* How could this be, if the Name *Son of God* did not ſignify *Godhead?*

I have given ſome *Anſwer* to that Text in the 5th of *John*, in ſome of the foregoing Pages. But to make it yet clearer, I proceed:

Anſw. 1. It is poſſible that ſome learned Men among them might have a confuſed Notion from the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, that the *Meſſiah* or the *Son of God* was to have true and real Godhead in him, which *Godhead of the Meſſiah* is a certain Truth, and hath been ſufficiently proved. Now, becauſe he called himſelf the *Son of God*, and repreſented himſelf as the *Meſſiah*, therefore they might infer that he aſſumed that *Godhead* to himſelf which belonged to the compleat Character of the *Meſſiah*, and upon this account might charge him with *Blaſphemy*, by way of Conſequence.

Yet I have much Reaſon to doubt, whether the Scribes and Phariſees did certainly know that the *Meſſiah* was to be the *true God*; for the whole Nation of the *Jews*, with their Prieſts and Doctors, were moſt ſtupidly and ſhamefully ignorant of the true Character and Glory of the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom. Had the Phariſees themſelves any notion that *Chriſt was* to be the *true God*, they would

never have been puzzled and ſilenc'd at that Queſtion of our Saviour, *Matth.* 22. 43, 44, &c. If *the Meſſiah be the Son of David, how could David call him Lord?* or, *If David calls him Lord, how is he his Son?* Their Suppoſition of the Godhead of the *Meſſiah* would have eaſily anſwered this Difficulty, if they had had any ſuch Opinion.

Beſides, we have little Reaſon to ſuppoſe that the Phariſees knew more of the *Divinity of the Meſſiah* than the Diſciples themſelves did during the Life of *Chriſt*. Now it appears from many Parts of the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, that they did hardly believe at all that he was the *true God*; or if they did, yet their Faith of it was very low, wavering and doubtful; and yet doubtleſs they firmly believed *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah* and the *Son of God*, in a Senſe ſufficient for Salvation.

When *Peter* in the Name of the reſt had made ſo glorious a Confeſſion, *Matt.* 16. 16. *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God*, he could not mean that *Chriſt* was the *great and glorious God*; for in *v.* 22. he *took up* his Maſter very ſhort, and *began to rebuke him*. Surely he would not have rebuked the *Great God* his Maker, at leaſt not immediately after ſuch a Confeſſion of his Godhead.

Now, if the Apoſtles themſelves were in a State of Grace and Salvation, when they can hardly be ſuppoſed to believe *Chriſt to be the true*

true and the eternal God, and yet they believed and profeſſed him to be the *Son of God*, then that Name *Son of God* doth not neceſſarily imply and include his *Divinity*.

But to return to the *Objection*.

That which I take to be the plaineſt, the cleareſt, and the moſt ſcriptural *Solution* of this Difficulty is this which follows,

Anſw. 2. 'Tis evident that the Deſign of the wicked *Jews* in theſe Places of the Hiſtory was to bring the higheſt Accuſation againſt our Saviour, and to load him with the groſſeſt Calumnies that all their Wit or Malice could draw from his Words or Actions, *Luk.* 11. *ult. laying wait for him, and ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his Mouth, that they might accuſe him.*

If ever he ſpake of his *Kingdom* (tho' he own'd his *Kingdom was not of this World*) yet they in their Malice would conſtrue it into *Sedition* and *Rebellion*, and make him an Enemy to *Cæſar*. And ſo when he called *God his own Father*, and declared himſelf to be the *Son of God*, they in the Fury of their falſe Zeal conſtrue it into *Blaſphemy*; as tho' to own himſelf to be the *Son of God*, were to *aſſume Equality with God*: whereas *Chriſt* ſhows them plainly, that theſe Words did not neceſſarily imply ſuch a Senſe; and this is ſufficiently manifeſt by the Defence which *Chriſt* made for himſelf in both thoſe Places of the Hiſtory. Give me leave to repeat briefly what I ſaid before.

If we look into *John* 5. 18, when the *Jews* accuſed him that by calling *God his Father* he *made himſelf equal with God*, he doth by no means vindicate that Senſe of his Name *Son of God*, but rather denies his *Equality with God* conſidered as a Son, ℣. 19, *&c. Verily, verily I ſay - - - - the Son can do nothing of himſelf: The Father ſheweth the Son all things that he doth, and he will ſhew him greater Works than theſe.* Thence I infer, that he hath not ſhown him all yet; and ℣. 30. *I can of myſelf do nothing - - - - I ſeek not mine own Will, but the Will of the Father who hath ſent me*, &c. All which Expreſſions ſufficiently evince, that he did not intend to ſignify his own Godhead, or Equality with God, when he called himſelf *the Son of God*, for in his very Anſwer to their Accuſation he repreſents himſelf inferior to and dependent on God the Father.

Now let us look into the other Text where our Saviour is thus accuſed, and defends himſelf, (*viz.*) John 10. 30——39. He ſaith, *I and my Father are one.* 31. *Then the Jews took up Stones again to ſtone him.* 32. *Jeſus anſwered them, Many good Works have I ſhewed you from my Father; for which of thoſe Works do ye ſtone me?* 33. *The Jews anſwered him, ſaying, For a good Work we ſtone thee not; but for Blaſphemy, and becauſe that thou being a Man, makeſt thyſelf God.* 34. *Jeſus anſwered them, Is it*

not

not written in your Law, I ſaid, ye are Gods? 35. *If he called them Gods, unto whom the Word of God came, (and the Scripture cannot be broken)* 36. *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified, and ſent into the World, Thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I ſaid I am the Son of God?*

In which Portion of Scripture we may obſerve theſe three things.

(1.) That *Chriſt* doth neither plainly and expreſſly own nor deny himſelf here to be *the true God*, for this was not a proper time to ſatisfy the Curioſity of the malicious *Jews* in ſuch a ſublime Doctrine, in which he had not as yet clearly and fully inſtructed his own Diſciples.

Yet (2.) he gives ſeveral Hints of his *Godhead*, or his being *one with the Father*, when he ſays, *I and my Father are one*; and when he ſays, *℣.* 38. *I do the Works of my Father, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him*; by which he ſecretly intimated that the *Man Jeſus* had alſo a divine Nature in him, and was perſonally united to *God*, tho' he did not think fit to preach his own Godhead plainly at that time.

And indeed if he had not been the *true God*, and in that Senſe *one with the Father*, we may juſtly ſuppoſe, that he would upon this occaſion have denied himſelf to be *true God*, and thus roundly renounced the *Concluſion* itſelf which they pretended to draw from his

his Words, as well as he did deny the *Juſtneſs of their Conſequence*, from his calling himſelf the *Son of God*. And therefore ſince he did not renounce the *Concluſion*, we may reaſonably infer that he was the *true God*: But ſince he does deny the *Juſtneſs of their Conſequence*, we may as reaſonably infer that his meer calling himſelf the *Son of God* does not prove nor include his *Godhead*; which appears plainer under the next particular.

I ſay therefore (3.) The chief Deſign of his Anſwer, was to refute the Calumny of the *Jews*, and the Weakneſs of their *Inference*, by ſhewing that the Name *Son of God*, doth not neceſſarily ſignify *one equal to God*; but that the neceſſary Senſe of it here can riſe no higher than to denote one who was nearer to the Father, and was *ſanctified, ſealed, and ſent* by the Father in a way ſuperior to all former Prophets, Kings and Magiſtrates, to whom *the Word of God came*, and who, partly on this account, might be called *Gods*.

Prophets or Kings, Judges or Doctors of the Law were called *Gods*, and *Children* or *Sons of the moſt High*, in *Pſal.* 82. 6. and in other Places of Scripture, becauſe they came from God, they were commiſſion'd by God, and carried with them ſome Repreſentation of the Wiſdom, Power, Authority, and Dominion of God in the ſight of Men. Now our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Meſſiah, the great Prophet, Judge, Doctor or Teacher, and King

of

of his Church, *came forth from God* in Heaven, in a literal and more eminent manner, *was ſent by him into this World* with a higher Commiſſion, and repreſented more of the Wiſdom, Power, and Dominion of God than any former Kings or Prophets ever did; and if they upon this account were dignify'd with the Name or Title of *Gods*, or *Sons of God*, much more right has the *Meſſiah* to this Name or Title.

The Argument which our Lord uſes is *à minori ad majus*; he puts the Reaſon of his more unqueſtionable and ſuperior Right to this Title, upon the Superiority of his Character and Miſſion, or his more immediate Commiſſion from the Father. His Words might be paraphraſed thus: They who were *originally in and of this World* were made Prophets, Teachers or Kings, meerly by the *Word of God coming to them*, and giving them Commiſſion, either by the ordinary Directions of the written Word, or (at beſt) they received their Authority from the *Word of God coming to them* * by ſome Voice or Viſion,

* Our Lord knew that he himſelf was the divine *Logos* or *Word of God*, and 'tis likely that he uſed theſe Words, *To whom the Word of God came*, with this View and Meaning in his own Mind: "Surely if thoſe are called *Gods*, to whom "the *Divine Logos* or *Word* made a Viſit from the Father, "the *Divine Logos* himſelf who came from the Father may "be well called the *Son of God* without Blaſphemy." But he did not think fit to expreſs himſelf ſo plainly to the *Jews* at that time, tho' he has left it upon Record in his Goſpel for our Obſervation and Inſtruction.

ſion, ſome divine Meſſage or Inſpiration, and yet they had the Title of *Gods* given them. Therefore the *Meſſiah* who was *not* originally *of this World*, but *was with the Father*, who *was ſanctified*, i. e. anointed with the Spirit, or ſet a-part by God himſelf, who *came forth from the Father* in Heaven, and was *ſent* immediately *by the Father into this World*, may ſurely be called the *Son of God* without danger of Blaſphemy. If they are call'd *Gods*, the *Meſſiah* may well be called the *Son of God*.

And he confirms the Argument thus: *The Scripture cannot be broken*, οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι, cannot be contradicted. As he who acts contrary to a Precept is ſaid to *break it*, λύειν, ſee *Matt.* 5. 19. *John* 5. 18. and 7. 23. So he who *contradicts* an Aſſertion of Scripture is properly ſaid λύειν, to *break it*. Therefore, ſince the Scripture which can't be contradicted, calls thoſe ancient Rulers, Teachers or Prophets *Gods*, as well as *Sons of God*, he who is appointed the moſt glorious Prophet and Ruler, might have been juſtify'd by the Language of Scripture, if he had aſſumed the Name God to himſelf, in direct and expreſs Language, and much more abundantly is he juſtified when he has only call'd himſelf the *Son of God*.

And indeed 'tis worth our Obſervation here, that tho' the *Jews* built part of their Accuſation upon his ſaying, *I and my Father are one*,

one, *Jeſus* does not directly anſwer to thoſe Words, nor undertake to vindicate or explain them; becauſe he might deſign in thoſe Words to intimate his *Godhead* or his *Oneneſs with God the Father*: Therefore he neglects and drops this part of the Ground of their Charge, and applies himſelf intirely to anſwer their Accuſation, as it was built upon his calling *God his own Father*, and himſelf *the Son of God*: And this he did becauſe he knew that this Name did not neceſſarily imply *Equality with God*, and ſo he could boldly refute their Inference and renounce the Charge.

Yet it ſhould be obſerved alſo, that before *Chriſt* leaves them he leads them to his Godhead, *i.e.* to his moſt intimate Union with the Godhead of the Father, ℣. 38. *That ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him*; that *he and his Father are one*, as he before expreſt his Godhead.

Thus I have explained myſelf at large in what I think to be the very Scope and Force of our Saviour's Argument; and indeed if we take the word *Son of God* to ſignify neceſſarily in that place *an Equality with the Father*; we plainly take away the Force of our Saviour's Argument and Defence, and we leave the Accuſation of the malicious *Jews* in its full force againſt him *.

In

* The Learned Dr. *Waterland*, whoſe Zeal for the Deity of Chriſt, and whoſe Skill in the Defence of it, are ſufficiently known; himſelf confeſſes that the Jews *could not from* Chriſt's

In ſhort, our Saviour's Anſwer muſt neceſſarily mean one of theſe two things, (*viz.*)

Either when he called himſelf *the Son of God*, he did deſign to let them know that he was *equal to God*, but that he was no Blaſphemer, becauſe it was a great Truth:

Or he deſigned to tell them, that his Words did not neceſſarily ſignify that he was *equal to God*, and therefore he was no Blaſphemer; that their Inference was not juſt, and that they carry'd the Charge further than his Words would bear. One of theſe two muſt (I think) be our Saviour's Deſign.

Now that he did not deſign the firſt of theſe, *i. e.* to ſhew that he was *equal to God*, ſeems evident to me, becauſe his Anſwer cannot reach this Senſe; and if ſtrained to this Senſe, 'tis very obſcure and far-fetch'd: It might alſo have been ſpoken in much plainer Language twenty ways, if it had been his Deſign to tell the *Jews*, that he was *equal with God*; and he would doubtleſs have proved it by plainer Citations out of the *Old Teſtament*, which aſſert the Divinity of the *Meſſiah*, had it been his Deſign to declare and maintain his Godhead at that time.

But if we ſuppoſe his Deſign was only to ſhew the *Falſhood of their Inference*, and that they had ſtrained his Words too far, then the whole Paragraph

Chriſt's *own Expreſſion clearly convict him of meaning more than that he was* God, *in the improper Senſe of the Word*, as it had been uſed, *Pſal.* 82. 6. See his *Vind. c. of Chriſt's Divinity*, P. 55.

Paragraph is natural, and eaſy to be underſtood, in the manner I have explained it.

From all this it will follow, That the *Belief of Chriſt to be the Son of God* in ſome more eminent Senſe than all the ancient Prophets and Kings were, *i. e.* to be the glorious *Meſſiah*, is all that *Chriſt* directly and plainly deſigned in calling himſelf the *Son of God*; and this muſt be all that was made neceſſary to Salvation in thoſe Scriptures which required their Belief in him as the *Son of God*.

Thus I have made it appear that the Name *Son of God* cannot neceſſarily imply his *divine Nature*, much leſs the incomprehenſible eternal Generation of the Son in one Eſſence with the Father. For tho' I firmly believe him to be *true God*, and in that Senſe *one with the Father*, yet I would not place the chief weight of this Doctrine on ſuch Arguments as will not ſupport it, nor build ſo important a Truth on an inſufficient Foundation.

But this Thought leads me to the next Section.

Sect. IV. *What advantage is there in not applying the Name* Son of God *to the Divine Nature of Chriſt?*

After all, many a pious Chriſtian will be ready to enquire and ſay, Since you acknowledge *Jeſus Chriſt* to have a *Divine Nature*, and to be truly and properly *God*, why

why have you taken ſo much pains to ſhew that his Name *the Son of God* in Scripture does not neceſſarily ſignify either his *Godhead* or his *Coeternal Generation* and *Sonſhip?*

To this *Enquiry* I hope I can give ſome ſatisfactory *Anſwers*, and offer ſuch *Reaſons* as may juſtify and ſupport this Attempt, and guard it from the juſt Cenſures of every reaſonable and intelligent Reader.

I. I was willing *to ſearch the true Senſe of Scripture in this Point, and to underſtand the Meaning of God in his Word.*

Where any Expreſſion is uſed ſo very frequently in the Bible as this Name the *Son of God* is, and that in Texts of awful and ſolemn Importance, which determine the things neceſſary to our Salvation, 'tis of great moment to know the Meaning of that Expreſſion, that we may not include too little or too much in it: and this in order to underſtand the Scripture aright in things neceſſary to Salvation, and to have a true Idea of what the Spirit of God means and intends; that we mayn't flatter careleſs Hypocrites with vain Hopes of Salvation, by ſetting the Mark too low, nor diſcourage humble Believers by ſetting it too high: and that we may not abuſe ourſelves by falſe and miſtaken Notions, and imagine that we derive them all from the Word of God.

II. I was afraid *to build my Belief of the* Deity of Chriſt *upon feeble and inſufficient Foundations*, and therefore I thought it neceſſary

ceſſary *to examine this Argument which is drawn from his Sonſhip.*

The great Doctrine of the *Godhead of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and Faith in him as the *true God*, has been by many Perſons built chiefly on this Name which is given him, *viz. the Son of God*; and that upon this bare Preſumption, that as a *Son* amongſt Men has the ſame *ſpecific Nature* with his Father, ſo the *Son of God* muſt have the ſame *individual Nature* with his Father; but how weak this Argument is to ſupport ſuch a Doctrine, appears in the foregoing Diſcourſe. Now I would not have the Faith of Chriſtians in any important Doctrine, that is divinely true, built upon a Suppoſition that is feeble or falſe, leſt the Adverſaries take occaſion to inſult the Faith of Chriſtians, and to decry the Doctrine itſelf, as tho' it had no better Arguments or Foundations to ſupport it.

Beſides, when Chriſtians have built their own Faith and Hopes upon a Foundation ſo feeble and uncertain, they are more liable to have their Creed ſhaken, and to part with the glorious Doctrine itſelf; and therefore I would perſuade them rather to build their Faith on ſuch Arguments as will ſtand the Teſt againſt all Oppoſers: And I think moſt of thoſe which I have made uſe of in the *eighth* and *ninth* Propoſitions of the Treatiſe of the *Chriſtian Doctrine of the Trinity* may lay a claim to this Character, and will better ſup-

port this Faith than any Argument derived from his mere *Generation* or *Sonſhip*.

III. 'Tis neceſſary as far as poſſible *to remove all Cavils from every important Doctrine of Chriſtianity*, and ſuch is that of the *Deity of Chriſt*.

Now if the Doctrine of his *Deity* be built on his *Sonſhip*, then he muſt be *true God* conſidered as he is a *Son*; but the Notion of a Son in all Languages of Mankind importing ſome ſort of *Derivation* and *Dependence*, and the Notion of *Godhead* importing *Independence* and *Self-exiſtence*, ſeem to carry a ſort of Contradiction in them. And this becomes a mighty Prejudice to the Minds of Men againſt their Belief of the *Deity of Chriſt*, when they are told, that he is *God* as he is a *Son*, or that his *Deity depends on his Sonſhip*, i. e. his Deity is included in his derived and dependent Character.

Tho' I will not here aſſert that *abſolute Self-exiſtence* and *Independence* belong to every thing *in* and *of* God, (for I know not what Powers or Properties of *Godhead* depend on each other) yet I would not willingly prove the *Godhead of Chriſt* from the very Name which ſeems to exclude *Self-exiſtence* and *Independence*, ſince there are many other and better Proofs of it.

And tho' I dare not utterly renounce all thoſe Schemes of explaining the Trinity, which make the Divine Nature of *Chriſt* to be in any way

way or manner whatſoever *derived* or *communicated from the Father*, (for I muſt own myſelf loſt in theſe Unſearchables) yet I would not make the neceſſary Proof of the *Divinity of Chriſt* to depend on ſuch a Notion as in the common Language of Mankind implies *Derivation* and *Dependence*: and by this means, I think, I better guard this ſacred *Truth* from ſome of the *Cavils* that have attended it.

Now if by this Expoſition of the Name *Son of God* I remove any of the great Impediments out of the way of the *Arians* or *Socinians* from believing the *true Deity of Chriſt*, then I ſhall account myſelf to have done Service and Honour to that glorious Article of our Faith.

IV. I would do ſomething *to take away that Anathema and damning Sentence* which ſome Parties of Chriſtians who believe the Divinity of Chriſt have thrown on others, who alſo believe his Divinity, merely for *not explaining ſome particular Scriptures in the ſame way and manner that they do*, or for not uſing the ſame Arguments to prove his Divinity.

Since 'tis made a *Teſt* for our eternal Salvation in ſome Places of Scripture, whether we believe *Jeſus to be the Son of God*, or no; and ſince there are now, and have been in former Ages, many Chriſtians of great Piety and Worth who doubt of the *conſubſtantial Sonſhip of Chriſt*, and the *eternal Generation*

of his Perſon, even tho' they believe *his true and proper Godhead*, I would not willingly encourage the Scripture to be interpreted in ſuch a miſtaken Senſe, as ſhould exclude all theſe pious and excellent Perſons from Salvation, and forbid them the Kingdom of Heaven. For they may believe him to be *true God*, and to be alſo the *Son of God*, tho' they do not believe his *Godhead* to be owing to his *Sonſhip*.

There are ſome Perſons who have been ſo ſevere as to paſs a condemning Sentence on all thoſe who deny *Chriſt the Son*, conſidered *as the Son*, to be *the true God*. I hope they have done it merely thro' *Inadvertence*, or becauſe they thought it to be utterly impoſſible to maintain the *Godhead of Chriſt* upon any other Foot but that of his *co-eternal* and *conſubſtantial Sonſhip*. But whatſoever be their Reaſon for ſuch unjuſt Cenſure, yet I muſt confeſs I don't love to ſee Condemnation and everlaſting Death thrown upon Perſons who believe the ſame ſcriptural Doctrine of the *Deity of Chriſt* that we do, but chooſe to explain it another way.

Thus ſome of my *Motives* to this Enquiry are to do *Juſtice to the Truths of God*, and ſome ariſe from *Charity to the Souls of Men*. Nor is my Zeal for the Honour of my Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in the leaſt abated; for while I believe him in his complex Perſon to be both the *true and eternal God*, and alſo the

only

only begotten Son of the Father, and while I profeſs him to be withal the *great Prophet* and *Teacher*, as well as the Saviour of his Church; I conceive that more Honour is done him by ſearching out that true and exact Meaning of his own Words which this heavenly Teacher deſigned to convey to us, than by perſuading the World to read his *eternal Godhead* in thoſe Places where he did not deſign to reveal and expreſs it to Men.

Question II.

Did the Diſciples of Chriſt fully believe that he was the true God during his Life-time, or not till after his Death and Reſurrection?

IN order to ſolve this Queſtion, let us make theſe following Enquiries, *viz.*

I. What *Notion* the *Jews* had of their *Meſſiah* in general.

II. What *Ideas* or *Notions Chriſt* taught his Diſciples concerning himſelf.

III. What *Apprehenſions* or *Notions* the Diſciples received and imbraced concerning *Chriſt*.

IV. What *Indications* they may be ſuppoſed to give tending toward the *Belief* of his Godhead.

V. What *Indications* they give of their Ignorance or Doubt of it, or at leaſt what Evidences there are of the *Fluctuation* and *Uncertainty* of their Faith in that matter.

Now, by balancing theſe things one with another, we may at laſt come to form ſome true Judgment about the preſent Queſtion.

Sect.

SECT. I. *The* Jews *old Opinion concerning the Meſſiah.*

I. *WHAT Notion had the* Jews *in general concerning their* Meſſiah?

Anſw. Tho' the Old Teſtament furniſhed them with ſufficient Prophecies concerning his divine and human Nature, his ſpiritual Kingdom, his Sufferings, his Death and Reſurrection from the Dead, yet ſo wretchedly blinded were they with the corrupt Gloſſes of their Teachers, and with their own fooliſh Prejudices, that they did agree in no Notion concerning the *Meſſiah* more univerſally than in theſe falſe and miſtaken ones, *viz.* That he was to be a glorious temporal Prince, that he was never to ſuffer, nor to die, and conſequently not to riſe again, and that he was to exalt their Nation equal to or beyond its ancient Grandeur, and to raiſe them to a temporal Sovereignty over all the Nations of the Earth.

And the Diſciples themſelves were ſo rooted in theſe miſtaken Notions, that nothing could quite cure them but the actual Death and Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, his Aſcent to Heaven, and his pouring down the enlightning Spirit at the Days of *Pentecoſt*. For we find it evident enough, that the two Sons of *Zebedee*, *James* and *John*, hoped to be made great Miniſters of State, and *ſit at his Right-hand* and *at his left in a* temporal *Kingdom*, Mat. 20. 21. We read that when our Lord ſpoke

of his own Death and Sufferings, *Peter rebuked him* for it, *Math.* 16. 22. And none of them *knew what his riſing from the Dead ſhould mean*, Mark 9. 10. for they thought, together with the reſt of the People, that *Chriſt* or the *Meſſiah abideth for ever*, i. e. muſt never die, *John* 12. 34. And even after the Reſurrection of *Chriſt* they expected with ſome Impatience the ſame temporal Glory and Grandeur when they ſaid, *Acts* 1. 16. *Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore the Kingdom unto Iſrael.*

But to deſcend to Particulars, and enquire What opinion the *Jews* had of the Nature of their *Meſſiah*, Who or What he was to be.

1. They generally believed he ſhould be a *Man of their own Nation*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, of the Seed of *David*, born at *Bethlehem*, who was to be the *King of the Jews*, and their *Saviour*. When *Herod* demanded where the *Meſſiah* the *King of the Jews ſhould be born*, the *chief Prieſts and Scribes told him, at Bethlehem*, Mat. 2. 5. And they ſaid to him, *In Bethlehem of Judah, for thus it is written by the Prophet, And thou Bethlehem in the Land of Judah art not the leaſt among the Princes of Judah, for out of thee ſhall come a Governor that ſhall rule my People Iſrael.* And when *Jeſus* aſked the *Phariſees, Whoſe Son is Chriſt*, or the *Meſſiah?* they roundly anſwered, *The Son of David.*

Yet

Yet others of the *Jews* were ſo very ignorant and doubtful in this matter, that they refuſed *Jeſus*, and denied him to be the *Meſſiah*, for this very Reaſon, becauſe they knew his Birth and Parentage. *John* 7. 27. *We know this Man whence he is, but when Chriſt cometh, no Man knoweth whence he is.*

2. They believed that he had an *Exiſtence before he came into the World*; for we can hardly ſuppoſe that the Scribes and Prieſts ſhould be ſo ready in citing one part of this Verſe, *Micah* 5. 2. which ſhews him to be *born at Bethlehem*, and take no notice of the other part of it, *a Ruler in Iſrael, whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting*. Yet it may perhaps be doubted whether this Opinion was univerſal, becauſe in ſome Inſtances they were ſtupid enough to believe one part of a Chapter or Period concerning the *Meſſiah*'s Glory, and neglect another part which related to his Sufferings.

3. They believed that he had ſome *glorious and eminent relation to God.* This appears from the Name of Honour that the *Meſſiah* was univerſally known by amongſt them, *viz. The Son of God.* The Scribes, the Phariſees, the Prieſts, and all the *Jews*, talk'd with our Lord *Jeſus* freely about the *Meſſiah* under this Name and Title, as being the common Name of the *Meſſiah*, and perfectly well known amongſt them, *viz.* that the *Meſſiah* was the

Son

Son of God in ſome ſuperior and more excellent way. When *Philip* told *Nathanael*, *John* 1. 46. *We have found him of whom Moſes and the Prophets did write*, that is, the *Meſſiah*; *Nathanael* being convinced that *Jeſus* was he, preſently ſaluted him by this Name, *Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael.*

4. The Prophets in the Old Teſtament frequently intimate the *Divinity of Chriſt*; and ſome few of the ancient *Jews* might probably believe that he was the *Memra*, or Word of the Lord, the *Shekinah* or glorious Habitation of God, of which the *Chaldee Paraphraſt* ſometimes ſpeaks. Dr. *Allix* in his *Judgment of the ancient* Jewiſh *Church againſt the* Unitarians, ſeems to be too poſitive and triumphant in this point, that this *Memra* or *Logos* to which the *Chaldee Paraphraſt* aſcribes the Creation of the World, and the Government of it, and particularly of the *Jewiſh Nation*, is the *Meſſiah* in their Senſe. Mr. *Nye* and others utterly deny it. But the excellent Mr. *Robert Fleming*, in his Diſcourſe of *Chriſtology*, Vol. I. p. 136,—144. very judiciouſly follows a middle Path, and tells us, "That he did not find one of the "many Citations uſed by Dr. *Allix* that "ſeem'd to neceſſitate our Judgment this "way. Therefore he run thro' the *Targums* "himſelf in thoſe Places where he thought "it moſt probable to find what he ſought,

"and

" and yet could find but few Paſſages that " ſeemed very plainly to relate to the *Meſſiah.*" Upon which he concludes, " That tho' the " word *Memra* is ſometimes uſed for the " *Meſſiah*, yet 'tis much more frequently uſed " in other Senſes, and that the *Jewiſh Memra* " and *Meſſiah* are ſpoken of ſometimes as two " diſtinct Beings or Perſons *."

But what doubtful Hints or plain Evidences ſoever there might be from the Books of the Prophets or theſe Paraphraſtical Authors, that *Chriſt was to be the true God*, yet the *Jews* in *Chriſt*'s Time did not generally believe it: And tho' ſome learned Authors have aſſerted it, yet I never ſaw it proved.

Surely if the *Phariſees* had but embraced this Opinion, they could never been at a loſs to have anſwered our *Lord Jeſus*, when he ask'd them, *Mat.* 22. 43, 45, 46. *If Chriſt be David's Son, how doth he in Spirit call him Lord?* It was plain by their Silence and Confuſion, that they did not believe his *Godhead.*

* Mr. *Fleming* in that place tells us, that tho' he could not find the word *Memra* and *Meſſiah* uſed as explicatory of one another in thoſe Places which are plainly prophetical of *Chriſt*, yet he ſuppoſes the Reaſon might be this, that *Memra* denotes *Chriſt* with relation only to his Divine Nature before his aſſuming human Nature, and *Meſſiah* denotes him only as he was to appear viſibly and become Man; therefore it was hardly poſſible that both theſe Words ſhould be uſed of him at once. See *Chriſtology*, Vol. I. p. 143. Thus 'tis evident that Mr. *Fleming* ſearched after this Notion with a ſeeming Inclination to find it true, yet he could not find ſo great and uncontеſted Evidence of it, as to ſuppoſe that the ancient *Jews* generally embraced this Opinion, that the *Memra* or *Word of God* was the ſame with the *Meſſiah.*

head. Biſhop *Bull* is of this mind as well as Dr. *Whitby*. See *Bull's Judic. Eccl. Cath.* &c. c. 1. §. 13. and *Whitby's* Comment.

In ſhort, their Notions of this Matter were ſo very confuſed, ſo uncertain, ſo inconſiſtent, and ſo various, that they cannot be reduced to any certain or ſettled Scheme of Sentiments.

Sect. II. *What Ideas did Chriſt give his Diſciples of himſelf.*

II. I Proceed now in the *ſecond* place to inquire, *what Ideas or Notions our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *taught his Diſciples concerning himſelf.*

1. He takes particular Pains upon many Occaſions to ſhew that he was *ſent from God*, or *received Commiſſion from Heaven* to teach the Doctrines which he taught, and to perform thoſe glorious and ſurprizing Miracles which he wrought, to confirm both his Doctrine and his Commiſſion. This is ſo largely inſiſted on in the fifth, ſixth, and following Chapters of the Goſpel by St. *John*, that I need not cite particular Inſtances.

2. He proves by moſt infallible Evidences, that *he was the Meſſiah, the Saviour of Mankind*: and he endeavoured to lead his Diſciples out of their own national Prejudices, and to give them a juſter Notion of the Office of the *Meſſiah*, and his ſpiritual Kingdom. This he did in ſeveral of his Diſcourſes. But

But as to the Proof that he himſelf was the *Meſſiah*, he did not labour this Point ſo much by any long or direct Diſcourſes on this Subject, as by his preaching Grace and Duty, ſo as never Man ſpake before; by his Miracles and his Appearance upon all occaſions, with the Marks and Characters of the *Meſſiah* upon him. To prove this, I ſhall give but one Inſtance inſtead of many: When *John the Baptiſt* ſent his Diſciples to aſk him whether he was the *Meſſiah* or no; *Matth.* 11. 3. *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?* our Lord anſwered them only, by bidding them tell *John* their Maſter, that *the Blind received Sight, the Lame walk, the Dead are raiſed,* and *to the Poor the Goſpel is preached*; and let *John* and his Followers judge by theſe Characters whether I am the *Meſſiah* or no. Tho' I confeſs there are two or three Occaſions alſo which he took to profeſs himſelf the *Meſſiah* in direct and plain Words, *John* 4. 29. and 9. 37.

3. He often takes occaſion to declare, that *he had a Being before he came into this World.* John 3. 13. *No Man hath aſcended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man,* &c. John 5. 38. *I came down from Heaven not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me.* ℣. 51. *I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven.* John 8. 14. *I know whence I came and whither I go.*

John

John 16. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World; again, I leave the World, and go to the Father.* And his Diſciples underſtood him in the plain literal Senſe, ℣. 29. for immediately his Diſciples ſaid unto him, *Lo, now thou ſpeakeſt plainly, and ſpeakeſt no Parable.* John 8. 58. *Verily I ſay unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* And in his Prayer to his Father, *John* 17. 5. *Now, O Father, glorify me with thine own ſelf with the Glory which I had with thee before the World was.* ℣. 24. *My Glory which thou haſt given me, for thou lovedſt me before the Foundation of the World.*

4. He aſſumes to himſelf the *Character of the Son of God,* and that in a more eminent and ſuperior way than Men or Angels are the *Sons of God;* for he calls himſelf *the only begotten Son of God,* John 13. 16, 18. *The beloved Son of God,* John 5. 20. which he alſo took care that his Diſciples ſhould know, twice by a Voice from Heaven; *Luke* 3. 22. at his Baptiſm, and *Luke* 9. 35. at his Tranſfiguration. He told them alſo that he was ſuch a *Son of God* as *knew the Father* ſo as *none* beſides *knew him,* Luke 10. 22. ſuch a *Son* as that *the Father ſhow'd him all things that himſelf did,* John 5. 20. and that *whatſoever things the Father doth, theſe doth the Son likewiſe,* ℣. 19. that the *Father has committed all Judgment to him, that all Men ſhould honour the Son as they honour the*

the Father, ℣. 22, 23. and that the *Dead ſhould hear the Voice of the Son of God and live*; and *as the Father hath Life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have Life in himſelf:* which things cannot be ſuppoſed to be ſpoken of any meer Creature, and therefore by this ſort of Language, he gave ſome Intimations of his Union with Godhead, or his Divinity, tho' the meer Name *Son of God* be not conſtrued to ſo divine a Senſe.

5. He ſometimes takes opportunity to acquaint them with his *moſt intimate Union or Oneneſs with the Father*, and *his peculiar Communion with him.* For when he ſays, *John* 10. 29. *My Father, who gave me my Sheep, is greater than all*; yet he adds in the next Verſe, *I and my Father are one:* which I think are Intimations of a ſuperior and inferior Nature, and that the divine Nature of the Father was in him. This alſo he diſcovers in ſome other places. *John* 10. 38. *Believe the Works that I do, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him.* John 14. 7--11. *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father alſo: and from henceforth ye know him, and have ſeen him. Philip ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father;*

Father; and how ſayſt thou, Shew us the Father? Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The Words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or elſe believe me for the very Works ſake.

6. There are alſo ſeveral other Intimations that our Lord gave of his *Divinity*, tho' it was not the Doctrine that he thought fit at that time to teach in plain and expreſs Language.

When he tells them, that *where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them.* Matt. 18. 20. the *Greek* words are ἐκεῖ εἰμι, which ſeem to denote a divine Omnipreſence. When he ſays to *Peter*, *I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. 16. 14. it ſounds God-like. When he promiſes the Diſciples, *I will give you a Mouth and Wiſdom, which all your Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gain-ſay*, Luk. 21. 15. When John 2. 19. *Deſtroy this Temple and I will raiſe it up in three days*; he imitates divine Language ſo much, that it might have led the Diſciples onward to the Belief of his Deity.

His *active Behaviour* and *Conduct* in ſeveral Inſtances was ſuch, as there is ſome reaſon to think he would ſcarce have practiſed, had he not been *true God*; ſuch as his taking frequent

frequent occaſion to ſhew that *he knew their Hearts and their ſecret Thoughts; his Godlike way in working ſome of his Miracles*, which ſeems to be the very ſame which a God incarnate would have uſed: *his Sovereign and Godlike manner in caſting out Devils*, and his *conveying miraculous Gifts, in the ſame Way that God himſelf would probably have done*; and *his giving the Holy Spirit to his Diſciples*, in ſuch a manner, *John* 20. 21, 22. *As my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you; and when he had thus ſaid, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*, which ſeems to be an Imitation of God creating the human Soul of *Adam*, Gen. 2. 7. *He breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul.* Tho' it muſt be noted indeed that this was after his Reſurrection, and ſo comes not within the reach of my preſent Enquiry.

His *Paſſive Behaviour* alſo was ſuch as we can hardly ſuppoſe he would have practiſed, had he not been God; for he *admitted Perſons* on ſeveral occaſions *to worſhip him*, which we find both Angels and Apoſtles always forbid, leſt they ſhould ſeem to aſſume the divine Prerogative and Honour: He did not deny his Godhead when the *Jews* charged him with aſſuming *Equality with God*, &c. ſeveral of which Circumſtances, both of the active and paſſive Conduct of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, are ſet in the faireſt and ſtrong-

eſt light towards the Proof of his Divinity, by Mr. *Hughes* in his *Two Eſſays* on that Subject. And ſome Parts of the Argument ſeem to carry great Weight and Force with them; but I would not venture to lay the whole Streſs of the Cauſe there.

Thus tho' our Bleſſed Saviour did not plainly and expreſſly declare that he was the *true and eternal God*; for his divine Prudence did not think it proper to expreſs his Godhead in ſuch direct and glorious Language at that Seaſon *; yet by all theſe Methods of Speech, and by this divine Conduct of his, which I have deſcribed in the three laſt Particulars, he ſeems to have given abundant Intimations that his *human Nature had a peculiar Union to, and Communion with Godhead:* But ſince the *New Teſtament* is compleat,

* 'Tis no wonder that our Saviour did not freely and publickly declare his *own Godhead* in plain and expreſs Language, when he did not chooſe to declare himſelf the *Meſſiah* in ſuch an evident manner of Speech, but very ſeldom, and that privately too; tho' the Doctrine of his *Meſſiahſhip* was then of ſo much more Importance.

But there are many ſpecial *Reaſons* alſo which might be given, why our Lord *Jeſus* did not proclaim his own *Godhead* during the time of his Miniſtry on Earth. I ſhall mention but one that is evident and ſufficient, (*viz.*) that he muſt have done it either *with plain and convincing Proofs* of it or *without them*. If he had only aſſerted it plainly, *without convincing Proof*, he had haſten'd the Malice of the *Jews* to put him to death for Blaſphemy, before he had fulfilled all his deſigned Miniſtry upon Earth. On the other hand, if he had given *moſt convincing Proofs of it* while he aſſerted it, the *Jews* and *Gentiles* had been reſtrained from putting him to death at all; for St *Paul* tells us expreſsly, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *Had the Princes of this World known it, they would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory.*

compleat, we can underſtand thoſe Hints better than his Diſciples could in that day.

And tho' he did not uſe theſe Words, that *Jeſus the Son of Man is perſonally united to the divine Nature*, yet he ſaid ſo much as in our Apprehenſion now amounts to this Senſe, when he ſaid, *I and my Father are one. I am in the Father, and the Father in me. The Father who is in me doth the Works. He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father*, &c. *i. e.* he hath ſeen the Glory and Power, and Grace of God the Father, whoſe divine Nature or Godhead is alſo in the Son, and *dwells* in me bodily. And tho' we can never tell exactly what makes the *perſonal Union* between the divine and human Natures in *Chriſt*; yet perhaps this may be a juſt Evidence of a perſonal *Union with the Godhead*, (viz.) when the Actions and Characters and Sufferings which *Chriſt* performed and ſuſtained, might be properly ſaid to be performed and ſuſtained *immediately* by God himſelf. But I much queſtion whether his Diſciples in that day did certainly infer ſo much from theſe Words.

Sect. III. *What Idea the Diſciples had of* Chriſt.

I Come now to conſider *what Apprehenſions or Notions the Diſciples did receive concerning our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt *in his own Life-time.*

'Tis not enough for me here to repeat the foregoing Heads, and ſhew what *Chriſt* told them; for we cannot ſay the Diſciples underſtood and effectually learn'd all that our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* taught them. 'Tis evident in many Places of the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, that he ſpoke ſeveral things to them which were above their preſent Apprehenſion; the *Spirit of God* which was promiſed to deſcend upon them, was not only to *bring to Remembrance* the things that *Chriſt* had ſpoken; but to give them a *fuller Underſtanding* in the Meaning of them. And as there were many things which *Chriſt* had to ſay to them, but forbore in his Life-time *becauſe they could not bear them yet*, John 16. 12. So there were ſome things which he did ſpeak to them in a more obſcure manner, by Hints and Intimations, which they could not at that time bear in the full Light and Glory of a divine Explication.

But if we ſearch the evangelical Hiſtory, I think we ſhall find that they received and entertained the following Sentiments concerning him.

1. They firmly believed *that he was ſent of God.* Our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf was Witneſs to this their Faith, *John* 17. 8. *I have given unto them the Words which thou gaveſt me, and they have received them, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me.*

2. They

2. They were convinc'd that *he was the true Meſſiah:* John 6. 69. *We believe and are ſure Thou art that Chriſt.*

3. That *he had a peculiar and glorious Relation to God,* that he was the *Son of the living God,* which primarily referred to the Dignity of his Perſon, and oftentimes included in it alſo his Character, or Office as the *appointed Saviour.* This was the Subſtance of *Nathanael's* Confeſſion, *John* 1. 49. *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael.* This was alſo *Peter's* Confeſſion, *Matth.* 16. 16. *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God,* which he ſpake in the Name of the reſt, as well as *John* 6. 69. where the ſame Words are repeated.

4. They believed alſo that *he had an Exiſtence before he came into this World.* When the Diſciples told him, *John* 16. 30. *We believe that thou cameſt forth from God*; 'tis evident from the Context that they did not only mean that he *received his Commiſſion from Heaven,* and was ſent by God to preach to the World; but that he had a Being with the Father before he came into this World, as he himſelf expreſſes it, ℣. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World: again, I leave the World, and go to the Father:* which they underſtood in the literal Senſe, without Metaphors, as they themſelves expreſs it; *Now thou ſpeakeſt plainly, and ſpeakeſt no Parable* or *Metaphor,* ℣. 29. And

our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in his Teſtimony concerning them, ſeems to make theſe two diſtinct Articles of their Belief, (*viz.*) his *Preexiſtence* and his *Miſſion*, John 17. 8. *They have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me.*

5. They believed alſo that *God was in a moſt eminent and peculiar manner preſent with him*, according to the Multitude of Expreſſions he had uſed to that purpoſe, of his *Father's being with him*, and of the *Father's dwelling in him:* and this was the Language of their Sermons at firſt, *Acts* 10. 38. *Jeſus of Nazareth did* great things, *for God was with him.* But they did not ſeem to have any fixed and certain Belief of ſuch a peculiar and perſonal Union of the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* with the *true God* during his Life-time, as to give him the Name and Title of *God.* They had heard him ſay, that *he and his Father were One;* but they did ſcarce underſtand his *Oneneſs* with the Father, and *Communion in the Godhead* in ſo ſublime a Senſe, as was afterwards revealed to them, for they never called him *God* before his Reſurrection. Which brings me to the next general Head.

SECT.

SECT. IV. *What Evidence they gave of believing his true Deity.*

THE fourth thing I propoſed was to ſhew *what Indications the Diſciples may be ſuppoſed to give tending towards a Belief of his Godhead.*

1. Upon ſome ſpecial Occaſions *they worſhipped him.* The *Leper* that was cleanſed *worſhipped Chriſt*, Matth. 8. 2. The *Ruler* that ſought the Life of his Daughter, *worſhipped him*, Matth. 9. 18. The *Woman of Canaan worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, help me*, Matth 15. 25. But all this was before he wrought the Miracle in their favour; and probably it ſignifies no more than a great degree of Humility in the manner of their Petition, perhaps a bowing the Knee, or falling on the Face at his Feet.

The *blind Man*, who was healed, *worſhipped him* alſo, when he profeſt himſelf to be *the Son of God*, John 9. 38. and his Diſciples that *were in the Ship worſhipped him*, when he walk'd on the Water and ſuppreſt the Storm, *Matth.* 14. 32, 33.

But it may be doubted whether all this ariſes to the Notion of *Religious and Divine Worſhip*, ſince this Word is ſometimes uſed in Scripture, referring to *moral* or *civil Honours* paid to our Fellow-Creatures, 1 *Chron.* 29. 20. *They bowed their Heads and worſhipped the Lord*

and the King, Matth. 18. 26. *The Servant fell down and worſhipped his Lord.* Rev. 3. 9. where *Chriſt* himſelf ſays to the Church at *Sardis*, *I will make them to come and worſhip before thy Feet.* And perhaps ſome that knew not that *Chriſt* was *God*, might pay this ſort of Worſhip to him here on Earth, *i. e.* a meer high degree of Reverence and Obeiſance under the ſurprizing Influence of the Miracles which they heard of, or which they ſaw.

When one of the *ten Lepers* which were healed, came back, *Luke* 17. 15. it is ſaid, *with a loud Voice he glorify'd God, and fell down on his Face at the Feet of* Chriſt, *giving him Thanks, and he was a Samaritan.* Now it may be obſerved here, that the cleanſed Leper firſt *glorify'd God*, as the great Author and firſt Cauſe of his healing, and then *fell down on his Face* in a worſhipping Poſture at the Feet of *Chriſt* to *give him Thanks*, as the glorious Means and miraculous Inſtrument of his Deliverance, not knowing that *Chriſt* who healed him, was himſelf the *true God.*

Thus theſe Perſons did not ſeem to worſhip our Lord as the *true and eternal God* with proper *divine Worſhip.* Yet it ſeems probable that he would have ſcarce accepted of any ſuch Imitation of divine Worſhip, or indulged any thing that had the Appearance of it, if he had not been *true God.* Many Perſons might pay *Chriſt* this high Degree of

Honour

Honour and Proſtration without Belief of his Deity, tho' perhaps he would have refuſed it, had he been a meer Creature; even as *Cornelius* worſhipped *Peter*, Acts 10. 25. when we have no reaſon to believe that he thought *Peter* was the true God: Yet *Peter* forbid it, leſt it ſhould have any Appearance of aſſuming divine Dignity to himſelf.

2. *Simon Peter* was greatly ſurprized at the multitude of Fiſhes taken at once, when he let down his Net at the direction of *Chriſt*, Luk. 5. 4, *&c.* When he ſaw it, *He fell down at Jeſus Knees*, ſaying, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful Man*, O Lord. Which Expreſſion may ſeem to import, " Thou art ſo ho-" ly and pure, O Lord, and haſt ſomething " ſo divine in thee, and ſo much like God, " who hates all Sin, that ſuch a poor ſinful " Wretch as I am, have too much Defile-" ment in me to come ſo near thee, and " may have juſt reaſon to dread thy Pre-" ſence." Whether he might at this Seaſon have an overwhelming Glimpſe of his Divinity, it is not eaſy to ſay: But it may be eaſily ſaid, that this Miracle alone was not ſufficient to give a juſt convincing Proof of his Godhead.

3. The Apoſtles ſeem to make a Petition to Chriſt for ſpiritual Mercies in a way of divine Worſhip, *Luke* 17. 5. and the *Apoſtles ſaid to the Lord, Increaſe our Faith*; which Addreſs ſeems to have more of the Appearance of

of Religious Worſhip paid to him by them, than any other Expreſſion I know of before the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*.

Yet ſome would queſtion whether this Petition did evidence their firm Belief of his Godhead: For when they had ſeen him put forth his miraculous Power on the Bodies of Men in ſuch a glorious manner, when they found that he *knew the Thoughts of their Hearts**, and had an inward acquaintance with their Souls, which appeared in ſeveral Inſtances, and when they had ſeen and heard him *forgive Sins*, Matt. 9. 2. and Luke 5. 20. perhaps they might imagine that God had given him this ſpiritual Power over their Souls, and that he was commiſſioned to exerciſe this Power (even as he commiſſioned his Diſciples to *heal the Sick*, to *raiſe the Dead*, &c. Matt. 10. 8. and to *forgive Sins*, John 20. 23.) tho' he were not in his own Nature *the true and eternal God*. For it is remarkable, that when he *forgave the Sins of the Man whom he healed*

* The meer *Knowledge of their Thoughts* was not ſufficient to prove the *Divinity of Chriſt*, ſince God has been pleaſed in former times to communicate this Knowledge to his Prophets; ſo *Ahijah* knew the Thoughts of *Jeroboam*'s Wife, for God had told him. 1 King. 14. 5, 6. *The Lord ſaid to Ahijah, Behold the Wife of Jeroboam cometh to aſk a thing of thee, &c.* And much leſs can we ſuppoſe the Diſciples in that day of Darkneſs and Ignorance did from thence infer his Deity. Yet I think that Expreſſion of *Chriſt*, Rev. 2. 23. *Ye ſhall know that I am he which ſearcheth the Reins and the Hearts*, compared with Jer. 11. 20. & 17. 10. gives us a good Argument for his Deity, or that he is one with that God who *ſearches the Heart*, as his peculiar Prerogative; but this was long after his Aſcent to Heaven.

healed of the Palſy, tho the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſaid, *Who can forgive Sins but God?* and ſo charged him with Blaſphemy; yet the Multitude only *marvelled and glorified God who had given ſuch Power unto Men*, Matt. 9. 8. Now the Multitude ſpoke honeſtly the Senſe of their Hearts, but the *Scribes* ſtretched his Conduct to an Accuſation of Blaſphemy.

There is a parallel Caſe in *Mark* 9. 22. where the Man brought his *Son who was poſſeſt with the Devil*, to our bleſſed Lord; *Maſter*, ſays he, *if thou canſt do any thing, have compaſſion on us and help us*. Here it is evident that the Man had not ſo much as a firm Belief whether *Chriſt could work this Miracle* or no, much leſs can he be ſuppoſed to believe that *Chriſt was the true and eternal God:* then preſently afterwards he cryed out, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief.* Now the utmoſt that we can reaſonably imagine his ſudden Faith arrived at, was a Belief that *Chriſt* was able to caſt out the Devil and cure his Son; yet he deſires *Chriſt* to *help his Unbelief.* Now the meer ſudden Expreſſion of this Requeſt will hardly prove the poor Man was convinced of the Godhead of Chriſt; for 'tis poſſible he might mean only, *Shew thy power, and give ſome further Teſtimony to aſſiſt my Faith.* But if he did believe *Chriſt's Deity*, then we muſt ſuppoſe him tranſported by a ſudden divine Impulſe beyond

beyond the general Faith of the Apoſtles themſelves, and carried above the Diſpenſation of that Day.

4. The Diſciples may ſeem to own his Omniſcience *John* 16. 30. *Now we are ſure that thou knoweſt all things*, &c. but probably at that time they underſtood this *all things* in a limited Senſe (as 2 *Sam.* 14. 20. where the Woman ſaid the ſame thing to *David*; ſo 1 *John* 2. 20. *Ye have an Unction and know all things*, and ℣. 27.) For the utmoſt Inference the Diſciples make from it was, that *Jeſus came forth from God*, ℣. 30. not that he was God himſelf. It may be another Reaſon alſo to think the Diſciples underſtood this Word *all things* in a limited Senſe, becauſe *Chriſt* himſelf had told them but a very little before this Time, that he himſelf did *not know the Day of Judgment*. Matt. 24. 36. and Mark 13. 32.

Tho I think it reaſonable for us to go farther than they did, and to apply ſeveral of the things I have mentioned to his *Godhead* (*viz.*) his *knowing Their thoughts*, his *forgiveneſs of Sins*, &c. becauſe we have a full Account of theſe and many other Tranſactions of *Chriſt*, and we know ſo much of his *Divinity* and Glory from other parts of the Bible; yet whether the Diſciples in that Day did infer his *Divinity* from any of theſe foregoing Occurrences, and applied them to him as to the *true God*, may bear a juſt Doubt and Enquiry.

5.

5. They *believed that he was the Meſſiah*; and the *Meſſiah* is ſpoken of in ſeveral Places of the Old Teſtament under the Character and Titles of the *true God*. But as we cannot find that the learned Doctors of that Age did generally underſtand thoſe Prophecies, or believe the true *Deity of the Meſſiah*, ſo neither do we find any Hint in the Hiſtory of the Goſpel that the Apoſtles themſelves before the *Death of Chriſt* underſtood theſe Prophecies, ſo far as to apply them to the *Meſſiah* in that Senſe; but only thought him to be the greateſt of Prophets, and to be the appointed *King of Iſrael* and their Saviour.

6. They *believed and confeſſed him to be the Son of God*: but this Title does not neceſſarily amount to any more than a glorious Likeneſs to God, a nearer and more peculiar Relation to God, a ſpecial Office of *Meſſiah-ſhip*, and a more eminent Derivation of his human Nature from God than any other Creatures, either Angels or Men, who are called the *Sons of God*, could ever pretend: This I think is made pretty evident in another Diſſertation.

Thus I have mentioned the faireſt and ſtrongeſt Evidences that I can find of any Degree of Faith or Belief that the Diſciples had of the *Deity of Chriſt* during his Life, and 'tis poſſible they might ſometimes have a Glimpſe of that glorious Doctrine.

SECT.

Sect. V.

THE laſt thing I propoſed, was to ſhew, *What Indications the Diſciples gave during the Life-time of Chriſt of their Diſbelief of his Godhead, or at leaſt of the Uncertainty of their Faith in that Matter.*

1. If they had a firm and ſteady Belief that he was the true God, ſurely we ſhould have found them upon ſome occaſion or another *evidently expreſſing their Faith in this matter*, both for their own and their Maſter's Intereſt and Honour; ſince we never find that he forbid them to publiſh this to the World, tho' he did forbid them to publiſh ſome of his Miracles, his Transfiguration, his own Prophecies of his Death, Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, *&c.*

And if they had not thought proper to publiſh to the World, that *their Maſter was the true God*, yet we have much Reaſon to ſuppoſe that, if they had believed it, they would upon ſome Occaſion or other before his Death, have addreſt him as *Thomas* did after his Reſurrection, *My Lord and my God.*

We cannot but ſuppoſe alſo, that amongſt their many Doubts and Queries, they would have asked him this obvious and important one, *How could he be God, and his Father be God alſo, and yet not two Gods?* But we find nothing of this kind, tho' they put many

a Queſtion to him both of leſs Difficulty and leſs Importance.

Nor do we find that they talked of him to the World *under any Character of Godhead*; but on the contrary, we always find them ſpeaking of him *as a Man*, and that not only in his Life-time, but juſt after his Death too, as *a great Prophet that was riſen up amongſt them*, Luke 24. 19. *Jeſus of Nazareth a Prophet mighty in Word and Deed before God and all the People.*

2. If they had believed him to be the *true God* that made the Heavens, and the Earth, the Winds and the Seas, they *would never have expreſt ſo much Surprize and Wonder at his rebuking the Wind and bidding the Sea be calm.* Luke 8. 24, 25. *They being afraid, wondered, ſaying one to another, What manner of Man is this? for he commandeth even the Winds and Water, and they obey him.* I confeſs the word *Man* is not in the Original; but ſtill their Wonder at the Obedience that was paid him by the Elements ſeems an Argument that they did not believe him to be the *Almighty God that made them.*

Now this is not the firſt time they were thus aſtoniſh'd and ſurpriz'd; for when *Simon Peter*, a good while before this *let down his Net*, at the Command of Chriſt, and *incloſed a great Multitude of Fiſhes, he was aſtoniſhed and all that were with him*, Luke 5. 9. And if any of them may ſeem to have a Glimpſe of his

Divinity

Divinity on this Occaſion, yet they had forgot or loſt it again, when in *chap.* 8. they were as much ſurprized at his rebuking the Winds and the Waves.

You have another Inſtance of this kind, *Matth.* 21. 19, 20. *And when the Diſciples ſaw that the Fig-tree* which our Lord curſed, preſently *withered, they marvelled, ſaying, How ſoon is the Fig-tree withered away!* And this was not long before his Death neither, when we may ſuppoſe their Knowledge was moſt advanced; whereas the Diſciples would never have marvelled that he could deſtroy a Fig-tree *by a Word*, if they had believed him to be that God who made all things *by his Word.*

3. If they had believed *Chriſt* to be the *great and glorious God*, they would not have *treated him with ſuch an indecent Roughneſs*, as they did upon ſome particular Occaſions; as *Matth.* 15. 33. when *Chriſt* ſaid, *he would not ſend away the People faſting, leſt they faint in the way*, the Diſciples made him a very rude Reply (to ſay no worſe of it) when they anſwered, *Whence ſhould we have ſo much Bread in the Wilderneſs to fill ſo great a Multitude?*

Another Inſtance of this kind appears in their free and unbecoming Addreſs to *Jeſus*, *Matth.* 15. 12. *Then came his Diſciples and ſaid to him, Knoweſt thou that the Phariſees were offended after they heard this Saying?*

Saying? without ſo much as *Sir*, or *Maſter* to preface it. Whereby it is plain, they either at that time *doubted* whether he knew what Offence the *Phariſees* took, or elſe they gave him a *Reproof* for ſpeaking ſuch things as ſhould offend the *Phariſees*, and a *Caution* leſt he did it again. But either of theſe Suppoſitions ſufficiently manifeſt they did not believe him to be the *true God*.

So when he ſpake of his Death and Reſurrection, *Matth.* 16. 22. it is ſaid, *Peter took him and began to rebuke him, ſaying, This ſhall not be unto thee, Lord.* Now we can hardly ſuppoſe that *Peter* would have been ſo free as to take up ſuch Language to *his great Creator*, and to give ſuch a rebuke to *his God*.

I might add alſo, that tho' the *Virgin Mary* under the Influence of Rapture and Inſpiration expreſſes herſelf thus, *Luke* 1. 47. *My Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour*, yet if ſhe had firmly believed *her Son* to be *her God*, ſhe would not have chid him ſo ſeverely when he was twelve Years old, *Luke* 2. 48. *Son, why haſt thou dealt thus with us?* becauſe he ſtay'd in the Temple, and was left behind, when they travelled homeward.

4. If they had thought *Jeſus Chriſt* was the *true God*, they would *never have tryed to entertain the Curioſity of their Maſter, by ſhowing him how magnificent the Buildings of the Temple were*, Matth. 24. 1. *His*

Diſciples came unto him for to ſhow him the Buildings of the Temple; and one of them ſaid to him, Maſter, ſee what manner of Stones and Buildings are here, Mark. 13. 1. and as St. *Luke* expreſſes it, *How it was adorned with goodly Stones.* They muſt needs know this was but a poor Entertainment to pleaſe that glorious Being, who had formed and built this Earth, and had ſpread abroad the ſtarry Canopy of the Heavens.

5. They had frequent Opportunity of obſerving that *Chriſt* knew their Thoughts, and on this occaſion they once took notice, *John* 16. 30. and *ſaid, Now we are ſure that thou knoweſt all things.* Now if they had been convinced that he was the *true God,* they would certainly have declar'd their Senſe and Faith of his Godhead, and *not have contented themſelves with this poor* Inference; *By this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God,* i. e. Thou hadſt a Being, or didſt dwell with the Father, and art come from him. And even when they aroſe to this degree of Belief, our Lord takes notice, that their Faith had not been very long advanced ſo far as this, or at leaſt, it had not been long eſtabliſh'd and firmly rooted in this Point: For *℣.* 31. *Jeſus anſwered them, Do ye now believe?*

After all, I might obſerve this alſo concerning *Martha* and *Mary,* who were well acquainted with *Jeſus,* and for whom he had a peculiar and ſpecial Affection (as well as for *Lazarus*

Lazarus their Brother) *John* 11. 6. and he had ſo far acquainted them with his Perſon and Office, that they *believed him to be the Chriſt*, or Meſſiah, *the Son of God which ſhould come into the World*, ℣. 27. Yet neither of them ſpeak of any Faith they had, that he had Power in himſelf to raiſe the Dead, tho' *Jeſus* ſeems to have urged them to it, ℣. 25. The utmoſt Faith which they expreſs is this, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not died.* ℣. 21, and 32. and ℣. 22. *I know that even now whatſoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.*

Upon the whole Survey of things it appears that the Diſciples during the Life of *Chriſt* had not arrived to any firm Belief of his Godhead: And if at any time they had a Glimpſe of his Deity, it ſeems rather to be under the Influence of a *Surprize and Rapture*, beyond the level of that imperfect Diſpenſation, and beyond the common Exerciſe of their Faith in that day.

And indeed *Thomas* ſeems to be under the Power of ſuch a *divine Rapture*, when even after the Reſurrection of *Chriſt* he was favoured with ſo ſenſible a Conviction, and he cried out, *My Lord and my God*; which is the firſt plain and certain Indication of any of the Apoſtles believing the *Deity of Chriſt*.

Theſe things will give occaſion to three or four more *Queſtions*, (viz.)

Queſt. I. *Did the Diſciples believe him then to be a mere common Man?*

Anſw. 1. *No, I think not:* For tis very probable that they were informed of his *extraordinary Conception*, and *his Birth* of the Virgin *Mary* his Mother, ſo that he came into the World in a diviner way, and ſuperior to other Men, having God himſelf for the Father even of his Fleſh: And thus *the Holy thing that was born of* the Virgin was *call'd the Son of God*, Luke 1. 35.

'Tis probable alſo that they believed that ſublime and near Relation in which his Soul ſtood to God, being the *Son of God* in a ſuperior Senſe to all other Men, even before his Incarnation; and that he had a *pre-exiſtent State*, where he dwelt *with God*, and whence he *came forth from God* when he *came into this World*: Thus he was eminently the *Son of God*, as to his *Body* and his *Soul*.

They alſo believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, their *anointed King*, and the higheſt and greateſt of all the *Prophets*, the *Redeemer* of *Iſrael*, and their *Saviour*, and that in this Senſe alſo he was *the Son of God*.

They knew him alſo to be *indued with the Spirit of God* in a moſt glorious and eminent degree; or as *John the Baptiſt* expreſſes it, to have the *Spirit given him without meaſure*, John 3. 34.

And they knew the *peculiar and intimate Preſence of the Father* was with him, which he ſo often taught them in expreſs Words, that *the Father was in him and He in the Father*; and

and that *He and the Father were one:* yet they did ſcarce arrive at the Belief of a *perſonal Union* of the Human Nature with the Divine.

All theſe things joined together exalted his Character in their Eſteem, far above the common Level of Mankind.

Queſt. II. If they did not believe the Godhead of *Chriſt* who had ſuch ſpecial Advantages above other Men, *may it not well be doubted whether there were ſufficient Proofs of his Divinity ever given to Mankind before his Death?*

Anſw. 1. By ſeveral Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, I think the Godhead of the *Meſſiah* might have been proved, and when they had compared theſe Prophecies with the Actions and Life of *Chriſt*, they had plain Evidences that he was this *Meſſiah:* The Diſciples therefore might have had reaſonable ground to have inferred this Doctrine of his Deity. But ſo ignorant was that Generation, ſo overrun with national Miſtakes, ſo unacquainted with Scripture, and the true Meaning of it, that the Apoſtles in that Day did not believe many other things concerning *Chriſt*, which were written in the *Old Teſtament* in as plain and expreſs Language as his *Godhead.* Such were the Predictions of his Sorrows and Sufferings, his Death and his Riſing again, and his final Exaltation: But we have *Chriſt*'s own Word for it, even after he roſe again, that they were

Fools and ſlow of Heart to believe all that the Prophets have ſpoken, Luke 24. 25.

Anſw. 2. Some of the Speeches which *Chriſt* made concerning himſelf do certainly repreſent him in too ſublime a Character *for any mere Creature*; which I have mention'd before: and by ſome Circumſtances of his Conduct, they might have found out *his Godhead*, eſpecially if they had compared them with his Character as *Meſſiah*. But they labour'd under the Power of many Prejudices, and as our Lord often charges them, that they were dull of Apprehenſion, hard to be inſtructed, and ſlow to believe.

Anſw. 3. Tho' there might be a bare external Sufficiency in the Notices that *Chriſt* gave of his own Godhead for their Conviction, yet theſe were made more abundantly clear and evident to them, when according to the Promiſe of Chriſt, *his Spirit brought to Remembrance*, and explained the things that he had before ſaid to them: then he *took of the things* of Chriſt, and revealed them to his Apoſtles as he promiſed, *John* 14. 26. and 16. 14.

I might add alſo, that all theſe Notices and Evidences of the *Divinity of Chriſt*, ſtand in a much fairer Light before us who have the whole Hiſtory of the Life, Death, and Reſurrection of *Chriſt*; and the Writings and Sermons of the Apoſtles, to compare with the Writings of the Prophets; which it was not poſſible

poſſible the Diſciples ſhould do in ſo compleat a manner, and to ſo great Satisfaction during the Life of *Chriſt*, had they been never ſo ſagacious, and never ſo well prepared.

Queſt. III. *How could the Diſciples truſt in him as their Saviour, and commit their Souls to him for Salvation in his Life-time*, if they had not a firm Faith in his Godhead?

Anſw. The way whereby the Fathers before *Chriſt* were ſaved, was not ſo much by a direct Act of Faith on the Perſon of the *Meſſiah*, who was to come, as by the *direct and immediate Exerciſe of Faith* or Truſt *on the Mercy of God, as it was to be revealed in and thro' the Meſſiah* in due time. Now the Diſpenſation of thoſe three or four Years which paſt during the Life of *Chriſt*, was a ſort of *Medium* between the Law and Goſpel: and the Acts and Exerciſes of the Apoſtles *Faith* or *Truſt and Dependance*, like that of the Patriarchs, might be more directly placed *on the Mercy of God himſelf for Salvation*, as it had begun to manifeſt itſelf in and by *Jeſus* the *Meſſiah*, now come into the World. So St. *Peter* expreſſes it, 1 Pet. 1. 21. *You who by him do believe in God.*

Tho' they were frequently called to *believe in Chriſt*, yet you find they were ſo unskilled in a *direct Act of divine Faith on him*, that our Lord was fain to repeat the Command with great Solemnity but juſt before his Death. *John* 14. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo*

in me; as if he ſhould have ſaid, "Ye have "a long time truſted and profeſt your Faith "in God, and his Mercy, make *me* now alſo "the direct Object of your *Faith* or *Truſt*, "as ye have made *God the Father*."

Anſw. 2. Under the great Darkneſs and Confuſion of their Notions in that Seaſon of Twilight, they ſometimes paid too little Honour to *Chriſt*, becauſe they had too low an Eſteem of him; and ſometimes the Honour they paid him thro' the Influence of Rapture and Surprize (tho' not too high in itſelf) yet it might be above and beyond the clear Diſcernment of their Underſtandings and their own ſettled Judgment concerning him. Thus they might now and then exert ſome faint Acts of divine Faith on him, while in the main they were doubtful of his Godhead. But a gracious God makes great Allowances for ſuch Weakneſſes in Faith and Practice, where the divine Diſcoveries which he makes to Men, have but imperfect Degrees of Light and Evidence.

Queſt. IV. *Does it not follow then*, If *the Diſciples were in a State of Grace, and yet doubted of the Deity of Chriſt*; ſurely the Deity *of Chriſt was not a fundamental Article in that Day?*

Anſw. 1. *Fundamentals* are different in different Seaſons and Times, Nations and Ages; for as God makes more or leſs Diſcoveries of divine Truth to Men, ſo more or leſs is neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation.

Surely it was not a fundamental Article for *Peter* to know, and believe *the Sufferings and Death of Chriſt as a Sacrifice for Sin, and his Reſurrection from the Dead*, at that time when he rebuked our Saviour himſelf, becauſe he ſpake of his dying, *Matth.* 16. 22. And when none of the Apoſtles *knew what riſing from the Dead ſhould mean*, as *Mark* 9. 10. yet the *Belief of the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt* was certainly a *fundamental* Article, and neceſſary to Salvation in a little time afterward; and is become neceſſary to Chriſtianity itſelf, 1 *Cor.* 15. 14, 17. *If Chriſt be not riſen, then is our Preaching vain, and your Faith is alſo vain, ye are yet in your Sins.*

The Doctrine of the *Divinity of Chriſt* therefore may not be ſuppoſed to be a *fundamental Article* in the time of *Chriſt's Life*, becauſe we have Reaſon to believe the Apoſtles were in a State of Grace and Salvation, before there is any ſufficient Evidence of their Faith therein: But it will not follow thence, that the ſame Doctrine either is or is not a *Fundamental*, after it has been more fully and clearly revealed by the compleat Writings of the *New Teſtament*: And indeed a Truth ought to be revealed very plainly and with convincing Evidence, before it can be ever called a Fundamental.

It has been the conſtant Method of Divine Wiſdom in all Ages, to communicate to Man

the glorious Diſcoveries of the Grace of God by ſlow and gentle Degrees, and not to overwhelm our Faculties at once with a Flood of divine Light. He knows the Weakneſs of our Frame, he knows how dark are our Underſtandings, how feeble our Judgments, how many and great our natural Prejudices, and how hard it is to ſurmount them; and he demands our *Belief* in Meaſures anſwerable to his *Diſcoveries*. It is according to the *growing Evidence* of any divine Revelation, and the *gradual Advantages* that any Man has to know and underſtand that Revelation, that God juſtly expects the *growing Exerciſes* of our Faith.

Thus that Faith which is neceſſary to Salvation, conſiſts of more or fewer Articles, according to the different Ages of the Church, and different Degrees of Revelation and divine Light.

Thus tho' our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* was *true God* when he came firſt to be *manifeſt in the Fleſh*, yet the compleat Glory of his Perſon and the Beams of his Godhead did not diſcover themſelves in a triumphant and convincing Light during the Days of his Humiliation: and tho' it was neceſſary then, to all thoſe who had clear Knowledge of his Doctrine and Miracles, to believe that he was the *Meſſiah* (*Except ye believe that I am he, ye ſhall die in your Sins*, John 8. 24.) yet it doth not ſeem at that time to have been made neceſſary to believe *his Deity*, ſince the Diſcoveries of it were

were but imperfect, and 'tis plain that his own Apoſtles hardly believed it.

It is certain, that after the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, and the Days of *Pentecoſt*, the Apoſtles by degrees had more divine Light let into their Souls by the Holy Spirit, whereby they arrived at a fuller Knowledge of the Glory of *his Perſon* and *his Godhead*; yet 'tis very probable that the *Idea* which I have before deſcribed, is the higheſt they attained in his Life-time; and that not only on the account of the Arguments I have uſed already, but becauſe this Notion was ſo fixed and rooted in their Minds, that they generally deſcribed our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in this manner, in all their firſt Miniſtrations of the Goſpel, and they thought it proper to teach others in the ſame Manner as they had learned. So St. *Peter*, *Acts* 2. 22. tells the *Men of Iſrael*, *Jeſus of Nazareth* was *a Man approved of God among you by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye yourſelves know*, ℣. 24. *whom God has raiſed up, having looſed the Pains of Death.*

Again, *Acts* 3. 13. *The God of our Fathers hath glorify'd his Son Jeſus, whom ye delivered up*, &c. And he cites *Moſes* to ſhew what he was, ℣. 22. *A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your Brethren, like unto me.* So when he preach'd to *Cornelius* a *Roman*, Acts 10. 38. *God hath anoint-*

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ed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſs'd with the Devil, for God was with him, &c.

And St. *Paul* himſelf preached *Chriſt* under this inferior Character at firſt, tho' he *came not a whit behind the chiefeſt of the Apoſtles* in Knowledge, 2 *Cor.* 12. 11. and *Gal.* 2. 6. In his Sermon at *Athens*, he ſays, *God hath appointed a Day in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given Aſſurance unto all Men, in that he hath raiſed him* from the Dead, *Acts* 17. 31. Thus they begun with the human Nature and the Offices of *Chriſt*, and the peculiar aſſiſting Preſence of God with him, before they taught any thing of the Myſtery of his own Godhead or perſonal Union with the Divine Nature.

And indeed there is a good deal of Reaſon, why they ſhould not at firſt reveal and diſplay the glorious *Doctrine of the Trinity* and the *Godhead of Jeſus*, though they had known it never ſo well. It was not fit they ſhould break in all at once upon the blind *Jewiſh* Nation, nor upon the blinder *Gentiles*, with the Blaze of *Chriſt's Divinity*. For (to ſpeak humanly) it would have fill'd the Minds of Strangers with ſurprizing Doubts and Scruples, and raiſed in them an utter Prejudice againſt all further Attention to the Goſpel, if they had been told

told at firſt of *Three Perſons who were each of them the true God*, and *yet all Three but one God* *. This was not proper to be the very firſt Leſſon in Chriſtianity. The great Work of the Converſion of the World was done by degrees, as human Nature could bear. Thus *God* hath treated Men in all Ages, and led them on *from Faith to Faith*, Rom. 1. 17. Thus our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* treated his Diſciples, *John* 16. 12. *I have yet many things to ſay to you, but ye cannot bear them now.* And thus the *Apoſtles* treated the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to whom they preached, 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. and *fed* them *with Milk and not with Meat*, for they *were*

* *There is a remarkable Inſtance to this purpoſe in the* Conferences of the *Daniſh* Miſſionaries with the Heathens of *Malabar*. *The Miſſionary ſpeaking of the Son of God, the Malabarian reply'd,* Who is his Son? and is he alſo God? *Miſſ.* He is God bleſſed for ever. *Malab.* But pray Sir, recollect yourſelf, have not you been juſt now inveighing againſt Plurality of Gods? And now I find, you have yourſelves more than one; the Father is God, and the Son is God, then you have two Gods. *Miſſ.* We do not believe two Gods, but one only God; tho' at the ſame time, we firmly believe, that there are three Perſons in one Divine Eſſence; and yet theſe three Perſons are not three, but one God: And this we believe as a great Myſtery, *&c. And then he goes on to explain it by the* Underſtanding and the Will proceeding from the Soul, which are yet really one and the ſame thing with the Soul. *Upon which the* Malabarian *makes this Reply*; I find, *ſaid he*, that you, with your ſubtil ways of arguing, can make a Trinity conſiſtent with Unity; and if your Explication is abſolutely neceſſary to make others underſtand what you mean, pray, allow us the ſame Advantage of explaining the Doctrine of our Religion, and putting it in the moſt favourable Light we can, for the excluding of the Abſurdities imputed to us?. And this once granted us, 'twill follow, that our Plurality does not deſtroy the Unity of God, no more than your Trinity does. We worſhip the Gods upon no other account, than becauſe they are the Vicegerents of the Almighty, whoſe Adminiſtration

were not able to bear it. Thus by ſlow degrees they led them from the Knowledge of *Jeſus*, the *Son of Man*, to the Knowledge of *Jeſus* the *Son of God*; from the Diſcovery of *Jeſus* the *Prophet*, to the Diſcovery of *Jeſus* the *Meſſiah*, the Prieſt and the King; from the Revelation of *Chriſt* the *Saviour* of Men to the Revelation of *Chriſt* the *eternal Life* and *the true God*; from the Doctrine of the *Preſence of God* with him, to the Doctrine of the *perſonal Union* with Godhead, *in whom dwells all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, and who is *God over all bleſſed for ever* by virtue of this glorious and perſonal Union with the eternal God.

niſtration he imploys in governing the World, as he did employ them at the beginning, in creating and forming the ſame. And our God appearing among Men at ſundry times under different Shapes, had at every Apparition a different Name given him, which contributed very much to the multiplying of the Number of our Images; whereas in truth, they are but different Repreſentations of the ſame God, under different Aſpects and Appearances. See *Conference* Numb. 11. *Now if the Apoſtles had dealt ſo imprudently with the Heathens or with the Jews, by preaching the Doctrine of* the Trinity *at firſt in the fulleſt Expreſſions, they had embaraſs'd the Minds of their Hearers, and expoſed themſelves and their Doctrine of* Salvation by Jeſus the Meſſiah *to ſuch Difficulties and wrangling Diſputations. But you find no Controverſies of this kind raiſed in their firſt Preaching.*

QUESTION

QUESTION III.

Could the Son of God properly enter into a Covenant with his Father to do and ſuffer what was neceſſary to our Redemption, without a human Soul?

SECT. I.

IT is granted that the Generality of our Chriſtian Writers believe that 'twas only the Divine Nature or *Godhead of Chriſt* had an Exiſtence before he was conceived by the Virgin *Mary*, and became incarnate; yet whenſoever they would repreſent the exceeding great Love of the *Father* in ſending his Son into our World, that he might ſuffer and die for us, and when they would deſcribe the tranſcendent Love of *Chriſt*, in his coming into our World, and his ſubmitting to Death for our ſakes, they uſually repreſent it in ſuch Language as can never agree to his *Divine Nature* in any Propriety of Speech, but only to the pre-exiſtent *human Soul* of *Chriſt*, with its Deſcent into Fleſh and Blood, and the Sufferings

ferings of this *human Soul* for us. And 'tis evident that the Scripture itſelf leads them plainly to ſuch a Repreſentation of things: ſo that while they are explaining the tranſcendent Degree of the Love of *God* and *Chriſt* to Sinners, according to Scripture, they are led by the Force of Truth into ſuch Expreſſions as are indeed hardly conſiſtent with their own profeſt Opinions, but perfectly conſiſtent with the Revelation of Scripture, and the Doctrine of the *pre-exiſtent Soul of Chriſt*.

I was lately looking into the Sermons of that moſt excellent practical and evangelical Writer, the late Mr. *John Flavel*, in his Treatiſe call'd the *Fountain of Life opened*, or a *Diſplay of Chriſt*; where I found the following Expreſſions.

Serm. 2d. *p.* 13. *in Quarto*, where the excellent Author is deſcribing the glorious Condition of the *non-incarnate* Son of God, he ſays, "Chriſt was not then abaſed to the Con-
" dition of a Creature, but it was an uncon-
" ceiveable Abaſement to the abſolute inde-
" pendent Being to come under the Law; yea,
" not only under the Obedience, but alſo un-
" der the Malediction and Curſe of the Law,
" *Gal.* 4. 4. *God ſent forth his Son, made of*
" *a Woman, made under the Law.*"

Pag. 14. "He was never pinched with
" Poverty and Wants while he continued in
" that Boſom, as he was afterwards. Ah
" bleſſed *Jeſus!* Thou needeſt not to have

" wanted

" wanted a Place to have lain thine Head, hadſt " thou not left that Boſom for my ſake." And here the Author quotes Mr. *Anthony Burges*, in his Lectures on *John*. *He that was in the Boſom of the Father and had the moſt intimate, cloſe, and ſecret Delight and Love from the Father, how unſpeakable is it that he ſhould deprive himſelf of the Senſe of it, to put himſelf, as it were out of Heaven into Hell!* Mr. *Flavel* then proceeds, " He never " underwent Reproach and Shame in that " Boſom: There was nothing but Glory and " Honour reflected upon him by his Father, " tho' afterward he was depiſed and rejected " of Men. All the while he lay in that Bo- " ſom of Peace and Love, he never knew " what it was to be aſſaulted with Tempta- " tions, to be beſieged and batter'd upon by " unclean Spirits as he did afterwards: The " Lord embraced him from Eternity, but ne- " ver wounded him 'till he ſtood in our Place " and Room. There were no Hidings or " Withdrawments of his Father from him; " there was not a Cloud from Eternity upon " the Face of God 'till *Jeſus Chriſt* had left " that Boſom. It was a new thing to *Chriſt* " to ſee Frowns in the Face of his Fa- " ther. There were never any Impreſſions of " his Father's Wrath upon him, as there were " afterward. There was no Death to which " he was ſubject in that Boſom. All theſe " things were new things to *Chriſt*; he was

" above them all, 'till for our ſakes he volun-
" tarily ſubjected himſelf unto them."

Then, after the Author has ſhewn how great was the Intimacy, the Dearneſs, the Delight, which was between the Father and the Son, conſidered in their divine Nature, he draws ſome Inferences, *p.* 17.

" 1. *Infer.* What an aſtoniſhing Act of
" Love was this, for the Father to give the De-
" light, the Darling of his Soul out of his ve-
" ry Boſom for poor Sinners? Never did any
" Child lie ſo cloſe to a Parent's Heart as
" *Chriſt* did to his Father's; and yet he wil-
" lingly parts with him, tho' his only one, the
" Son of his Delight; and that to Death, a
" curſed Death for the worſt of Sinners. O
" matchleſs Love! a Love paſt finding out! if
" the Father had not loved thee, he had ne-
" ver parted with ſuch a Son for thee."

" 2. *Infer.* Adore, and be for ever aſtoniſh'd
" at the Love of *Jeſus Chriſt* to poor Sin-
" ners, that ever he ſhould conſent to leave
" ſuch a Boſom, and the ineffable Delights
" that were there, for ſuch poor Worms as we
" are. O the Heights, Depths, Lengths, and
" Breadths of unmeaſurable Love! *It is ad-*
" *mirable* (ſays Mr. *Burges* on *John* 17.)
" *that Chriſt ſhould not only put himſelf out*
" *of Comfort, but out of that manifeſted Ho-*
" *nour and Glory he might have retained to*
" *himſelf.* If ever you found by Experience
" what it is to be in the Boſom of God by
" divine

" divine Communion, would you be perſuaded " to leave ſuch a Boſom for all the good that " is in the World? And yet *Jeſus Chriſt*, who " was embraced in that Boſom after another " manner than ever you were acquainted with, " freely left it, and laid down the Glory and " Riches he enjoyed there for your ſakes. " What manner of Love is this? Who ever " loved as *Chriſt* loves? who ever deny'd him- " ſelf for *Chriſt*, as *Chriſt* deny'd himſelf for " us?" Then, after the third *Inference*, he adds:

" 4. *Infer.* How worthy is *Jeſus Chriſt* " of all our Love and Delight! he that left " God's Boſom for you, deſerves a Place in " your Boſoms."

" *Exhortation.* If *Chriſt* lay eternally in " this Boſom of Love, and yet was content " to forſake and leave it for your ſakes, then " be you ready to forſake and leave all the " Comforts you have on Earth for *Chriſt*."

Again, *Serm.* 4. *p.* 35. " Conſider how " near and dear *Jeſus Chriſt* was to the Fa- " ther: He was his Son, his only Son, ſaith " the Text: The Son of his Love: The Dar- " ling of his Soul: His other Self; yea, one " with himſelf: The expreſs Image of his " Perſon: The Brightneſs of his Father's Glo- " ry: In parting with him, he parted with his " own Heart, with his very Bowels, as I may " ſay. Yet *to us a Son is given*, Iſa. 9. 6. " And ſuch a Son as he calls his *dear Son*."

Now if we ſuppoſe the human Soul of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* to have had a pre-exiſtent State of Joy and Glory in the Boſom of the Father through all former Ages of the World, and even before the World was created, then theſe Expreſſions are great and noble, are juſt and true, and have a happy Aptneſs and Propriety in them to ſet forth the tranſcendent Love of God the *Father* in ſending his Son, and the tranſcendent Love of *Chriſt*, the Son of God, in coming from Heaven, and leaving the Joys and Glories of his Father's immediate Preſence in Heaven, to take on him ſuch Fleſh and Blood as ours is, and in that Fleſh and Blood to ſuſtain Shame, Sorrow, Pain, Anguiſh of Fleſh and Spirit, ſharp Agonies, and the Pang of Death.

And this Love is exceedingly enhanced, while we conſider that this human Soul of *Chriſt* was perſonally united to this divine Nature; ſo that hereby God himſelf is joined to Fleſh and Blood, *God* becomes *manifeſt in the Fleſh.*

But on the other hand, if we ſuppoſe nothing but the pure *divine Nature of Chriſt* to exiſt before his Incarnation, then all theſe Expreſſions ſeem to have very little Juſtneſs or Propriety in them: for the divine Nature of *Chriſt* (how diſtinct ſoever it is ſuppoſed to be from God the Father) yet can never leave the Father's Boſom, can never diveſt itſelf of any one Joy or Felicity that it was ever poſſeſs'd of,

of, nor loſe even the leaſt Degree of it: nor could God the *Father* ever diſmiſs the divine Nature of his Son from his own Boſom. Godhead muſt have eternal and compleat Beatitude, Joy and Glory, and can never be diſpoſſeſt of it. Godhead can ſuſtain no *real* Sorrow, Suffering or Pain. The utmoſt that can be ſaid concerning the *Deity of Chriſt* is, that there is a *relative* Imputation of the Sorrows, Sufferings and Pains of the Human Nature, to the Divine, becauſe of the Union between them; ſo that the Sufferings acquire a ſort of divine Dignity and Merit hereby: 'Tis granted indeed that this *relative* and *imputative* Suffering may be ſufficient in a legal Senſe to advance the Dignity of the Sacrifice of *Chriſt*, to a compleat and equivalent Satisfaction for Sin; yet the exceeding Greatneſs of the Love of the *Father* and the *Son* does not ſeem to be ſo ſenſibly manifeſted to us hereby, for all this Abaſement of the Godhead of Chriſt is merely *relative* and not *real.*

And as 'tis plain that the *divine Nature of Chriſt* could not be ſeparated from the Boſom of his Father, when he came into this World and took Fleſh upon him, ſo neither could the *human Nature* leave this Boſom of the Father, if it had no prior Exiſtence, and was never there. Therefore in the common Scheme all this glorious and pathetic Repreſentation of the *Love of Chriſt* in leaving the Joys and Glories of Heaven when he came to dwell upon Earth,

has no Ideas belonging to it, and it can be true in no Senſe, ſince it can neither be attributed to the human nor to the divine Nature of *Chriſt*, nor to his whole Perſon. I grant that by the Figure of *Communication of Properties*, what is true of one Nature may be attributed to the whole Perſon, or ſometimes to the other Nature; yet that which is not true concerning either Nature of *Chriſt* ſeparated, nor concerning the two Natures united, cannot be attributed to him at all: So that *parting with the Boſom of his Father*, and *forſaking the Joys and Glories he poſſeſt there*, are, according to the common Scheme, Words of which we have no Ideas.

But now if we conceive the *Soul* of *Chriſt* in its *pre-exiſtent* State, as the *firſt-born of every Creature*, the Darling of the Soul of God, who (as it were) *lay in the Boſom of the Father*, to *come forth from the Father* and *come into this World*, John 16. 28. to part with the Joys and *Glories* it was poſſeſt of there before the Foundation of the World, *John* 17. 5. to dwell in a feeble Manſion of Fleſh and Blood, Pain and Sorrow, to be cramped and confined in human Limbs, and to ſuſtain the Pangs and Puniſhment of a curſed Death on the Croſs for the ſake of rebellious Creatures. This is amazing Love indeed; this has a ſurprizing and ſenſible Reality in it, and ſhould awaken all the Powers of our Souls to admire and adore both God the *Father* for ſending his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, and *Chriſt* himſelf for conſenting to ſuch an Abaſement. SECT.

SECT. II.

IT has been made evident in the foregoing Section that our beſt Divines following the Track of Scripture Light and the Sacred Dictates of the Word of God, have ſet the tranſcendent Love of God the Father in ſending his Son, and the Love of *Chriſt* in his Incarnation and Death, in a moſt beautiful and affecting Light, if we ſuppoſe the *Soul of Chriſt* to have had a *pre-exiſtent State* of Joy and Glory with the Father before the World was. But I fear their Expreſſions are ſcarce conſiſtent with any clear or juſt Ideas or Conceptions, while they deny each part of the Human Nature of *Chriſt* (*i e.* his Soul as well as his Body) to exiſt before his Incarnation.

There is yet another and a very remarkable Inſtance wherein our Proteſtant Divines in a very juſt and affecting manner repreſent the *Covenant* of *Redemption* between the *Father* and the *Son* according to Scripture, upon the Suppoſition of the *Pre-exiſtence of Chriſt's human Soul:* But according to the Common or *Scholaſtic Explication* of the Diſtnction of Perſons in the *Trinity*, and the Denial of this *Pre-exiſtent Soul of Chriſt*, we can have no Ideas under all their glorious and affectionate Repreſentations of this Tranſaction between the *Father* and the *Son*. Let us enquire a little into this Matter.

The Common or *Scholastic Explication of the Trinity*, which has been long universally received by our Protestant Writers, and has been called *Orthodox* for these several hundred Years, is this, (*viz.*) That God is but one simple, infinite and eternal Spirit: Thence it follows, that the Divine Essence, Powers, and essential Properties of the *Father*, the *Son* and the *Spirit* in the Godhead are Numerically the very same Essence, Powers, and Essential Properties: That 'tis the same Numerical Consciousness, Understanding, Will and Power which belongs to the *Father* that belongs also to the *Son* and to the *Holy Spirit*: and that the *Sacred Three* are distinguished only by the superadded Relative Properties of *Paternity*, *Filiation* and *Procession*; but their Thoughts, Ideas, Volitions and Agencies, according to this *Hypothesis*, must be the very same Numerical Thoughts, Ideas, Actions and Volitions, in all the *Sacred Three*.

Now having these excellent Sermons of Mr. *Flavel* before me, who has well represented this Doctrine of the *Covenant of Redemption*, and the Transactions between *God the Father* and his *Son* before the World was, I would cite some part of that Discourse, in order to shew how well his Representation of this Matter agrees with the Doctrine of the *Pre-existent Soul of Christ*, tho' it can never agree to the common Explication of the *Trinity* without it. See Sermon III. p. 23, *&c.*

"I.

" 1. Conſider the *Perſons* tranſacting and " dealing with each other in this Covenant: " Theſe are God the Father, and God the Son: " the former as a Creditor, the latter as a " Surety: the Father ſtands upon Satisfaction, " the Son engages to give it."

" 2. Conſider the *Buſineſs* tranſacted be- " tween them, and that was the Redemption " and Recovery of all God's Elect."

" 3. The Manner or *Quality* of this Tranſ- " action: It was Federal, or in the Nature " of a Covenant: It was by mutual Engage- " ments and Stipulations, each Perſon undera- " king to perform his Part in order to our Re- " covery. The Father promiſeth that he *will* " *hold his Hand and keep him*, Iſa. 42. 6. " The Son promiſeth he will obey his Father's " Call to ſuffering, *and not be rebellious*, Iſa. " 50. 5. and having promiſed, each holds the " other to his Engagement."

" 4. Conſider the *Articles* to which they " both agree: God the Father promiſes to " inveſt him with a three-fold Office, (*viz.*) " to make him a Prieſt, Pſal. 110. 4. *The* " *Lord hath ſworn and will not repent, thou* " *art a Prieſt for ever after the Order of* " *Melchiſedec.* Heb. 5. 5. *Chriſt glorified not* " *himſelf to be made an High Prieſt, but he* " *that ſaid unto him thou art my Son.* " God the Father promiſes to make him a " Prophet, Iſa. 42. 6. *I will give thee for a* " *Light to the Gentiles, to open blind Eyes.*

And

" And to make him a King: Psal. 2. 6, 7. *Ask*
" *of me, and I will give thee the Hea-*
" *then for thine Inheritance.* Further the
" Father promiseth to stand by him, assist him,
" and strengthen him for his Work: Isa. 42.
" 5, 6, 7. *I will hold thy Hand,* that is, I
" will underprop and support thy Humanity
" when it is ready to sink under the Burden.
" He professeth to crown his Work with Suc-
" cess, to accept him in his Work, and to
" reward him for it with great Exaltation:
" Psal. 2. 7. *I will declare the Decree, the*
" *Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son,*
" *this Day have I begotten thee.* 'Tis spoken
" of the Day of his Resurrection when he had
" just finished his Suffering, and so the Apostle
" expounds and applies it, *Acts* 13. and in
" *Heb.* 12. 2. This was the *Joy that was*
" *set before him,* which encouraged him to
" *endure the Cross and despise the Shame.*"

" In like manner *Jesus Christ* restipulates
" and gives his Engagement to the Father,
" that upon these Terms he is content to be
" made Flesh, to divest himself as it were of
" his Glory, to come under the Obedience
" and Malediction of the Law, and not to
" refuse any the hardest Sufferings it should
" please the Father to inflict on him. Psal. 40.
" 6, 7. *Then said I, Lo, I come, I delight to*
" *do thy Will, O God.*"

" 5. These Articles were by both Parties
" *performed* precisely and punctually."

" 6.

" 6. This Compact between the Father and " the Son *bears date from Eternity*, before " this World was made: while as yet we had " no Exiſtence, but only in the infinite Mind " and Purpoſe of God. 2 Tim. 1. 9. *The Grace " which was given us in Chriſt before the " World began* was this Grace of Redemption, " which from Everlaſting was thus contrived " and deſigned for us. Then was the *Coun-" cil* or Conſultation *of Peace between them " both*, as ſome take that Scripture, *Zech.* 6. 13.

" P. 28. God the Father and God the Son " do mutually rely and truſt to one another " in the Buſineſs of our Redemption. The " Father relies upon the Son for the Perform-" ance of his Part. The Father ſo far truſted " *Chriſt*, that upon the Credit of his Promiſe to " come into the World and in the Fulneſs of " Time to become a Sacrifice for the Elect, He " ſaved all the Old Teſtament Saints. And ſo " doth Chriſt in like manner depend upon and " truſt his Father for the Accompliſhment of " all this Promiſe, that *he ſhall ſee his Seed*; " and that all the Elect that are yet behind, yet " unregenerated, as well as thoſe already cal-" led, ſhall be preſerved to the heavenly " Kingdom."

P. 29. This excellent Author, repreſents this Tranſaction between the Father and the Son before the World was in a way of *Dialogue*: He ſuppoſes the Father to ſay, " My " Son, here be a Company of poor miſerable

" Souls

" Souls that have utterly undone themſelves,
" and now lie open to my Juſtice; Juſtice
" demands Satisfaction for them, or will ſa-
" tisfy itſelf in the eternal Ruin of them.
" What ſhall be done for theſe Souls? And
" thus *Chriſt* replies: O my Father! Such
" is my Love to, and Pity for them, that
" rather than they ſhall periſh eternally, I will
" be reſponſible for them as their Surety;
" I will rather chooſe to ſuffer thy Wrath
" than they ſhould ſuffer it; charge their Debt
" all upon me, I am able to diſcharge it: And
" tho' it impoveriſh all my Riches, and empty
" all my Treaſures, (for ſo it did indeed,
" 2 Cor. 8. 9. *Tho' he were rich, yet for our*
" *ſakes he became poor*) I am content to
" undertake it."

Here I again deſire my Reader to obſerve, I cite not the Words of that great and excellent Man to refute them, for I greatly approve of almoſt every Expreſſion; much leſs would I expoſe that venerable Author, whoſe Memory and Writings I ſincerely reverence and honour: but my deſign is to ſhew what is the uſual Language of our beſt Divines on this Subject, for I might cite Paſſages of the like nature out of a Multitude of excellent Writers: This is only a Specimen of one for the reſt.

Now in reading over ſuch Accounts of Stipulations and Contract between the *Father* and the *Son* before the Foundation of the World, what proper Conceptions can we frame

frame, or what clear Ideas can we poſſibly have, while we ſuppoſe nothing but *Chriſt's* divine Nature tranſacting this Affair with the *Father*; and while at the ſame time we believe the divine Eſſence, Perfections and Powers, the Underſtanding, Will, Thought and Conſciouſneſs of the *Father* and of the *Son* to be numerically one and the ſame, ſince in the Godhead or divine Nature, they are but one and the ſame infinite Spirit? The mere Perſonalities, (*viz.*) *Paternity* and *Filiation*, cannot conſult and tranſact theſe Affairs in a Way of Contract, Propoſal and Conſent: It is nothing but two diſtinct Conſciouſneſſes and two diſtinct Wills can enter into ſuch a Covenant; but in the *common Explication* of the Trinity, the diſtinct *Perſonalities* of the *Father* and the *Son* do not make any real diſtinct Conſciouſneſſes or diſtinct Wills in the one infinite Spirit.

And let it be further noted alſo, that according to ſeveral of the Articles of this Covenant, one of theſe Beings or Perſons covenanting, ſeems to be inferior to the other, and to be capable of receiving Orders, Commiſſion, Support and Recompenſe from the other: But if only the *Deity of Chriſt* exiſted at that Time, and the Deity of *Chriſt* and of the *Father* have but one and the ſame numerical Conſciouſneſs and Volition, one and the ſame numerical Power and Glory, what need of Orders and Commiſſions, what need

of

of Promiſes of Support and Recompence? How can the pure *Godhead of Chriſt* be ſupported, or be recompenſed by the *Father*, who has eternally the ſame numerical Glory and Power?

In ſhort, all theſe ſacred and pathetic Repreſentations of Stipulation and Articles in the common Scheme, can amount to no more in our clear Ideas, and in a proper Conception of things, than the *ſimple Decree or Volition of the one eternal, infinite Spirit.*

I grant we may ſuppoſe the great God in a *figurative* manner of Speech conſulting thus with his own *Wiſdom*, with the divine Powers or Principles of Agency in his own Nature, as a Man may be *figuratively* ſaid to conſult with his own Underſtanding, or Reaſon, or Conſcience: But in literal and proper Language, it ſeems to be nothing elſe but an abſolute Decree of the *Great God*, that the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, when formed and united to Godhead, ſhould undertake and fulfil this Work four thouſand Years after this World was made. And thus, according to the common Hypotheſis, that very intelligent Being which was to come into Fleſh, and to ſuſtain all the real Sufferings, gave no ſuch early antecedent Conſent to this Covenant. 'Twas only the Godhead of Chriſt, which is impaſſible and could really ſuffer nothing, did decree that the human Nature ſhould exiſt hereafter, that it ſhould be united to the Godhead, and ſhould ſuſtain Agonies and Death for the Sins of Men. I

I would enquire farther alſo, according to this Explication of things, what poſſible Difference can we conceive between the Love of the *Father* in ſending his *Son*, and the Love of the *Son* in conſenting to be ſent on this compaſſionate Errand, if there were not two diſtinct Conſciouſneſſes, and two diſtinct Wills, if it was only one ſimple numerical Volition of the Great God? And how doth this abate our grand Ideas of the diſtinct and condeſcending Love of our bleſſed Saviour, in his Conſent to this Covenant, ſince that part of him which really ſuffered, *i. e.* his inferior Nature, had then no Exiſtence, and therefore could give no Conſent to this early Covenant of Redemption.

If *ſome* of theſe Difficulties may poſſibly obtain any tolerable Solution, by introducing many Figures of Speech, and be thus explained, according to the common *Explication* of the *Trinity*, without ſuppoſing the *Pre-exiſtence* of the human Soul of *Chriſt*, yet I am much inclin'd to think they can never be *all* ſolved or explained upon that *Hypotheſis*.

But on the other hand, if we give ourſelves leave to conceive of the human Soul of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in its pre-exiſtent State as the πρωτότοκος, *the firſt-born of every Creature*, Col. 1. 15. as the ἀρχὴ, *i. e.* the *Beginning* or the *Chief of the Creation of God*, Rev. 3. 14. *lying in the Boſom of the Father*, John 1. 18. and intimately united to the eternal

eternal *God*, then here are proper Subjects for theſe federal Tranſactions in the Covenant of Redemption before the Foundation of the World. And a moſt glorious and divine Covenant it was, between the *Father* and the *Son* in this View of things for the Salvation of poor ruin'd Man.

Tho' this bleſſed *Soul of Chriſt* were united intimately to the *Divine Nature*, yet God the *Father* might part with it (as it were) out of his own Boſom, *i. e.* diveſt it of heavenly Joys and Glories * by its own Conſent, without diſſolving the Union: God the *Father* might *prepare a Body* for it, and ſend it to dwell in Fleſh and Blood: God might inflict the Puniſhment of our Sins upon this bleſſed *Soul of Chriſt* incarnate, and afterwards give it an *high Exaltation*, not only *to the Glory which it had with the Father before the World was*, but to ſuperior Joys and Glories as the Reward of its Sufferings, according to Scripture, *John* 17. 3. and *Phil.* 2. 9.

And this bleſſed Soul of *Chriſt* united to Godhead, is a proper Subject to enter into theſe Articles, to accept of the Terms of this Covenant

* *Note*, This diveſting of the Soul of *Chriſt* of its primitive Joys and Glories does not require a Diſſolution of its Union to the *Divine Nature*; for the Godhead may be ſtill united, and yet may influence the human Soul in greater or leſs Degrees, and in various Manners, as to Light, Support, Joy, Glory, *&c.* according to different Occaſions and Circumſtances, which muſt be exceeding different in a State of Humiliation and of Exaltation; and the Manner and the Degree of Influence muſt always be determin'd only by the Divine Wiſdom.

Covenant of Redemption, to conſent to part with the Boſom of the Father, *&c.* And thus *Chriſt*, when *he came forth from the Father, and came into this World*, John 16. 28. laid aſide *that Glory which he had with the Father before the World was*, John. 17. 3. and *tho' he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor*, 2 Cor. 8. 9. And thus the *Father* and the *Son* manifeſt their tranſcendent Love to poor rebel Sinners in this federal Tranſaction, this Covenant of Redemption before Time began, which is the Foundation of all that was ever done in Time toward the Reſtitution of the Poſterity of *Adam*, to the Favour and the Image of God, and to everlaſting Happineſs. Every thing coincides admirably well in this Scheme, and anſwers the various Expreſſions of Scripture on this Subject, without ſtraining the Words by needleſs Tropes and Figures: It becomes ſo plain that *he that runs may read it*, and every private Chriſtian may underſtand theſe early Grounds and Foundations of his Hope.

ADVERTISEMENT.

NOTE, in a few Months will be publiſhed a large and more compleat Treatiſe on this Subject, (*viz.*) *the Pre-exiſtent Soul of* our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

QUESTION IV.

Is the Godhead of Chriſt and the Godhead of the Father one and the ſame Godhead?

THERE are ſeveral Conſiderations which lead me to agree with this general Opinion of almoſt all our Divines in the two laſt Centuries, (*viz.*) that *the Godhead of Chriſt is the ſame individual Godhead with that of the Father*; and that his divine Nature is not another infinite Spirit diſtinct from the Father, whatſoever ſublime Diſtinctions there may be in that one infinite Spirit, one of which, (*viz.*) the *Word* or *Wiſdom*, may perhaps have a more peculiar Reſpect to the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity, (*viz.*) the Son; and the other, (*viz.*) the *Power of God*; to the Holy Ghoſt.

1. If the divine Nature of *Chriſt* be another diſtinct Principle of Self-conſciouſneſs and Volition, another diſtinct ſpiritual Being, or another Spirit, this approaches ſo near to the

the Doctrine of *another God*, that it is very hard to diſtinguiſh it. For ſo far as our Ideas of Arithmetick and Reaſon can reach, this ſeems to be a plain Truth, *If one infinite Spirit be one God, two or three infinite Spirits muſt be two or three Gods.*

And tho' the Patrons of this Opinion ſuppoſe theſe three Spirits to be ſo nearly united as to be called one God merely to avoid the Charge of *Polytheiſm*, yet it muſt be granted, that this *one God* muſt then be one *complex infinite Being, or Spirit*, made up of three ſingle infinite Beings or Spirits; which is ſuch a Notion of the *one true God*, as I think neither Reaſon nor Revelation will admit. And yet if this were the true Notion of the *one God*, 'tis very ſtrange that Scripture ſhould not clearly and expreſſly reveal it.

2. The *God of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob*, the *God of Iſrael*, the *Almighty*, and *Jehovah*, is the proper Style and Title by which God the *Father* was known under the *Old Teſtament*: and 'tis under theſe Titles and Characters that he often appeared to the Patriarchs: yet it is agreed by all *Trinitarians* that it was *Jeſus Chriſt* appeared to the Patriarchs, and aſſumed this Style and theſe Titles of Godhead; which we juſtly ſuppoſe he could not have aſſumed if he had not had true Godhead belonging to his complex Perſon. And not only ſo, but this true Godhead muſt alſo be the Godhead of the Father, otherwiſe he

could not have aſſumed thoſe very Titles by which *God the Father* was always known to the Church, and by which they worſhip'd him as the God and *Father* of all. If the Deity of *Chriſt* were another diſtinct Eſſence or Spirit, his aſſuming thoſe Names whereby *God the Father* only was known to the *Iſraelites*, would lead them into Miſtake and Confuſion.

I know it may be *objected* here, that *Chriſt*'s aſſuming the Names and Titles of God the *Father* would lead them into as much Confuſion and Miſtake by leading them to believe that *Chriſt was God the Father*; and it may be urged yet further, that theſe Titles thus aſſumed, would prove that *Chriſt was God*, no more than that it does prove that *Chriſt was the Father*.

Anſw. If *Chriſt* has the ſame Godhead as the *Father*, and if in theſe ancient Appearances *Chriſt* came in the Name of the *Father*, as his Repreſentative, there is no great Inconvenience nor Confuſion if he were taken for God the Father, ſpeaking and acting in and by the Angel of the Covenant, or *Jeſus Chriſt* in his preexiſtent State: But there would be great Confuſion and Inconvenience in *Chriſt*'s aſſuming theſe divine Names, if he had not *Godhead* belonging to him, for then we ſhould take a Creature for God.

3. Several Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, which are cited by the Writers of the *New Teſtament* and apply'd to *Chriſt*, do moſt evidently

evidently refer to the Great *One God*, the *God of Iſrael*, the *Almighty*, the *Jehovah* in the *Old Teſtament*, whom all that read the *Old Teſtament* before the Days of Chriſt muſt ſuppoſe to mean *God the Father of all*, ſuch as *Pſal.* 68. 18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high.* Cited *Epheſ.* 4. and *Pſal.* 97. *Worſhip him all ye Gods.* Cited *Heb.* 1. 16. and *Pſal.* 102. 24, 25. *O my God, of old thou haſt laid the Foundations of the Earth.* Cited *Heb.* 1. 10. and *Iſa.* 40. 3, 4, 5. *Prepare ye the Way of the Lord.* Cited *Matth.* 3. 3. and *Joel.* 2. 32. *Whoſoever ſhall call on the Name of the Lord ſhall be delivered.* Cited *Heb.* 12. 26. and *Iſa.* 8. 13, 14. *Sanctify the Lord of Hoſts, and he ſhall be for a Stone of ſtumbling.* Cited 1 *Pet.* 2. 6, 8. and ſeveral other Places.

Now we cannot ſuppoſe, that all the holy Men before *Chriſt* were utterly miſtaken in their Application of theſe Texts to God the *Father*, ſince there is a plain and proper Senſe wherein this Application is true. And yet theſe Texts are properly applied to *Chriſt*, if we ſuppoſe the Godhead of the *Father* and of *Chriſt* to be the ſame, and that the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* was the *Shekinah* or Habitation of the great God intimately and perſonally united to him, and ſo made one Perſon with him, but ſtill under the Character of *Filiation* or *Mediation*. And in this Senſe *Chriſt* was *Emmanuel*, or *God with us*, Matth. 1. 23.

Beſides, let it be further conſidered, that the Deſign of the Apoſtles in the Citation of theſe Texts, and the Application of them to *Chriſt*, was to prove the Glory, Dignity and divine Grandeur of the complex *Perſon of Chriſt*: But this Citation of theſe Texts, and the Application of them to *Chriſt*, will ſcarce prove the *Godhead of Chriſt*, unleſs he has the ſame Godhead with that of the *Father*: nor indeed will they prove the Dignity or Glory of the *Perſon of Chriſt* any other way, but as they ſhew that what was ſpoken of old concerning the Godhead of the Father muſt neceſſarily belong alſo to *Chriſt*.

If *Chriſt* conſidered as God were another diſtinct Spirit from the Godhead of the *Father*, I think theſe Citations of the Apoſtle out of the Prophets would hardly prove his Godhead; nor do I ſee how they could prove the Grandeur and Dignity of his Perſon, unleſs it were granted that the Godhead of the Father was his Godhead, that *Chriſt and the Father are* one in this reſpect.

4. When *Chriſt* expreſſes his own Godhead in the *New Teſtament*, 'tis by declaring his *Oneneſs with the Father*, that is, the Union of the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* with the ſame Godhead that is in the *Father*. *I and the Father are one. He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father in me: The Father in me doth the Works.* And it muſt be obſerved that there

there is not any Place in the *New Teſtament* where the miraculous Works of *Chriſt* are aſcribed to any diſtinct Godhead of his own, different from the Godhead of the *Father*, or the Godhead of the *Spirit* of God that dwelt in him: And 'tis not reaſonable to ſuppoſe that *Chriſt* would have always uſed theſe Modes of ſpeaking, and attributed his own Works to the *Father* and his *Spirit*, if he himſelf had another Godhead or Divine Nature different from that of the *Father* and the Spirit: For why ſhould his miraculous Works be attributed to the Aids of another infinite Spirit which was not united to the Man *Jeſus*, and never be aſcribed at all to that diſtinct Spirit which is ſuppoſed to be united to him? I am ſure this ſort of Repreſentations lead our Thoughts away from ſuppoſing *Chriſt* to have any Godhead at all, if it be not the ſame as the *Father*'s.

5. If the Godhead of *Chriſt* be another diſtinct ſpiritual Being different from the Godhead of the *Father*, I do not ſee any fair and reaſonable manner, how the *Trinitarians* can ſolve the Difficulties which ariſe from thoſe Scriptures, where God the *Father* is repreſented as the *only true God*, and under that Idea diſtinguiſhed from *Jeſus Chriſt*; as *John* 17. 3. *To know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* 1 Cor. 8. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jeſus*

Chriſt, by whom are all things. Epheſ. 4. 5, 6. *There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one God and Father of all.* Now we can ſcarce ſuppoſe the higheſt Nature of *Jeſus Chriſt* to be another infinite Spirit diſtinct from God the *Father*, without excluding it from Godhead by theſe expreſs Scriptures: but they may eaſily be explained to admit *Chriſt*'s Godhead, if we ſuppoſe *Chriſt* to be ſpoken of in theſe Places chiefly in his inferior Characters as *Man* and *Mediator*; and yet he may be united to, and inhabited by the one true and eternal God, who is at other times called the *Father*, as being veſted with different relative Properties, and firſt in the great Oeconomy, as I have ſufficiently ſhewn in other Papers.

I add alſo, thoſe Texts in the Prophets, where it is ſaid, *I am God, and there is none elſe, there is none beſide me, I know not any*, Iſai. 44. 6, 8. and 45. 21, 22. give a further Confirmation to this Sentiment. For,

Whether we ſuppoſe the *Father* or the *Son* to be the Speaker here, 'tis ſtill with an Excluſion of any other Being, any other Spirit from the Claim of Godhead beſides the one infinite Spirit, the one true and eternal God, the *God of Iſrael*; and if our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* be not that one true eternal God, that one and the ſame infinite Spirit with the *Father*, theſe excluſive Sentences would hardly admit *Chriſt* and the *Father* too, to be the one true eternal God.

It

It is granted indeed that *Chriſt* is another Spirit as he is Man, and that other (*viz.*) the human Spirit, is not in himſelf properly God; but only by being united to true Godhead, even the Man *Jeſus* may be ſo called by the Communication of Properties. But ſince the Godhead of *Chriſt* is ſtill the very ſame Godhead with that of the *Father*, *Chriſt* is not excluded from Godhead by theſe ſtrong excluſive Expreſſions.

6. When our Saviour foretold that his Diſciples ſhould leave him alone, he adds, *John* 16. 32. *And yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me.* Now if his Godhead had been diſtinct or different from the Godhead of the *Father*, he needed not the *Preſence of the Father* with him for his Support; his own Godhead would have been all-ſufficient: But if his own Godhead be the ſame with that of the *Father*, then there is no difficulty in the Expreſſion.

7. There are ſeveral Places in the *New Teſtament*, where the words *God*, *Chriſt*, and *the Lord* in the ſame Paragraph are uſed very promiſcuouſly, ſo that one can hardly tell where *Chriſt* is ſpoken of, and where *God the Father*; particularly, *Rom.* 14. 6——12. Other Places where *God the Father* and *Chriſt* are called *our Saviour* promiſcuouſly, and perhaps *God our Saviour*, &c. *Tit.* 2. *Jude* 4, 25. at leaſt there is ſome difficulty in ſuch Places to determine which is meant; which would

would hardly have been left liable to ſo promiſcuous a Conſtruction, if *Chriſt* had not been *true God*, and if his Godhead had not been the ſame with that of the *Father*.

8. That the primitive *Chriſtians* worſhipped *Chriſt*, is ſufficiently evident from the ſacred Hiſtory: Yet we never find that the *Jews* of that Day, who were implacably ſet againſt them, ever accuſed them of Idolatry, or Creature-Worſhip, tho' that Charge would have beſt ſerved their Purpoſe to blaſt and deſtroy this new Religion.

Nor can we reaſonably ſuppoſe, that if the *Jews* had made this Objection, the ſacred Writers would have omitted to tell us ſo, becauſe this would have been ſo important and forcible an Objection againſt Chriſtianity, that it would have required a very particular Anſwer, that ſo Chriſtians in all Ages might have been taught to defend their Practice.

Thence we muſt infer, that when the primitive *Chriſtians* worſhip'd *Chriſt*, they cannot be ſuppoſed to worſhip *a mere Creature*, or any other but the *true God of Iſrael*; for the *Jews* would then certainly have charged them with Creature-Worſhip or Idolatry. Now this *true God of Iſrael* was God repreſented as the Creator, the Author, and the Father of all; it was that God who ſuſtains the ſupreme Character of Dominion and Majeſty, and maintains the Dignity and the Rights of

Godhead;

Godhead; it was that God who ſo often foretold the ſending of his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, and this is *God the Father*. 'Tis therefore this one Godhead, which is in the *Father*, which is the ſame with the Godhead of his *Son Jeſus Chriſt*, but under a diſtinct Perſonality: 'Tis the ſame one God whom the Chriſtians worſhipped, when they worſhipped *Chriſt* as *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*. It was the ſame Divine Nature or Godhead which the ancient *Jews* had been uſed to worſhip, as dwelling in *the Cloud of Glory* upon the Mercy-Seat, and was now come to dwell in Fleſh and Blood, to become *Immanuel*, God with us, to become *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*. Now there is ſuch a mutual Inhabitation and perſonal Union between the one eternal God, and a Creature in the Perſon of Chriſt, as renders this complex Perſon a proper Object of Worſhip, and this ſtands clear of Idolatry, even in the Senſe of the *Jews* themſelves, who were wont to worſhip God as dwelling in the Cloud.

And indeed this is the only Notion of the Worſhip of *Chriſt* that could poſſibly agree with their own Law, and with their firſt Commandment given in *Sinai*, and with all their own former Ideas of Worſhip, as due only to the one God: and 'tis the only Notion that could have been received by them without Difficulty and Oppoſition. If therefore the *Son* or *Word* be truly God, this Godhead muſt be

be *the ſame in Subſtance* with the Godhead of the *Father* whom the *Jews* worſhipped, otherwiſe he would be another God, and the *Jews* could not have failed to charge the Chriſtians with groſs Idolatry.

Upon the whole therefore there ſeems juſt reaſon to conclude, that whatever ſacred and unknown Diſtinctions may be in the Divine Nature itſelf, and however theſe Diſtinctions may lay a Foundation for God's Diſcovery of himſelf under three Perſonal Characters, as the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghoſt*, yet the Godhead of the Father ſeems to be the ſame one infinite and eternal Spirit which in ſome particular Principle or Power of its own Nature, or under ſome peculiar Diſtinction or Relation, is united to the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*; and hereby *Jeſus* becomes one with God, one complex intelligent Agent or Perſon, and hereby *Chriſt* comes to have a Right to thoſe divine Titles, the *Lord God*, the *Almighty*, *Jehovah*, the *God of Abraham*, *Iſaac and Jacob*, &c.

And by this means the great and fundamental Article of all Religion, the *Unity of the true God*, is maintained inviolable: And thus we moſt effectually preclude all the Objections and Cavils of the *Arian* and *Socinian* Writers againſt the Doctrine of the Bleſſed Trinity, and the Deity of Chriſt, as tho' this Doctrine introduced *more Gods than one*. For if we ſuppoſe the Man *Jeſus Chriſt*

Chriſt in his Soul and Body to be both an *intellectual* and *corporeal Shekinah* or Habitation of the one God, the God of *Iſrael*, we may juſtly call *Jeſus Chriſt, God manifeſt in the Fleſh, a Man in whom dwells all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily, a Man of the Seed of David, and yet God over all bleſſed for ever.* Nor is there ſo much as the Appearance or Shadow of our owning two or three Gods, which has been too often, and with ſome Appearance of Reaſon charged upon ſome other Modes of explaining this ſacred Doctrine.

QUESTION V.

Is there an intimate Union between the Lord Jeſus Chriſt and God the Father?

THO' I don't remember that the Words, *Unite*, or *Union* *, are any where found expreſſly in the Writings of the New Teſtament, yet the Idea which is deſign'd by theſe Words is often found in Scripture: and 'tis the uſual Cuſtom of the ſacred Writers to expreſs this Idea of the *Union* of ſeveral things together by *being one with another*, or by one *being in another*, and ſometimes by *each being in the other* mutually.

The Union between the *Body* and the *Soul* is repreſented by the Soul's being *in the Body*, 2 Cor. 5. 6. at home in the Body; and 12. 3. *whether in the Body or out of the Body, &c.* The Union of *Saints* to *God* is expreſt

* 'Tis granted that ἑνότης or Unity is twice found in the New Teſtament, *(viz.)* Eph. 4. 3, and 4. 13. but ἑνόω or ἕνωσις is not uſed by the ſacred Writers: nor is ἑνότης uſed to ſignify the *Union* of two things together into one.

preſt by mutual Inbeing: 1 John 4. 16. *He that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God dwelleth in him.* Our Union to *Chriſt* is often expreſt by *Chriſt being in us* and our *being in Chriſt*, John 15. 4, 5. Rom. 16. 7. and being *in the Lord*, ℣. 11. and in many other places.

Sometimes *Union* is expreſt by *both Being One:* ſo the *Saints* who are all united in one common Head are called *one Body and one Bread*, 1 Cor. 10. 17. And as the Union between *Man* and *Wife* is expreſt by their *being one Fleſh*, 1 Cor. 6. 16. *ſo he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.* ℣. 17.

The Union between *Jeſus Chriſt* and God the *Father* is expreſt by all theſe Ways, (*viz.*) by an *Inbeing* of Chriſt in the Father and the Father in him, and by *Oneneſs* with the Father, in the Writings of the Apoſtle *John*. See John 10. 3. *I and my Father are one.* John 5. 38. and 14. 11. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.*

But let it be always remember'd that *our* Union to *God* or *Chriſt* is but a meer faint Shadow or Reſemblance of the Union of *Chriſt* to *God the Father*; which vaſtly ſurpaſſes ours, and is of a ſuperior kind. This Union between *Chriſt* and God the *Father* is ſo near, ſo intimate, ſo peculiar, as gives occaſion for the New Teſtament to cite and apply to *Chriſt* many Paſſages out of the Old Teſtament: which relate to the God and Father

of

of all. The Names, the Characters, the Properties, and the Actions of the Father are given to Chriſt in ſeveral Inſtances and Forms of Expreſſion, which are not true nor can be admitted concerning *our* Union to God.

Tho' there be but *one Godhead*, and *one God, even the Father*, 1 Cor. 8. 6. yet by the intimate Union of the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* with this one Godhead or Divine Nature which is in the Father, *Chriſt* is the Lord *Jehovah*, He is *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, he is *God over all bleſſed for ever*; which would be Blaſphemy to ſay concerning Chriſtians. So *Chriſt* is *he that ſearches the Hearts and the Reins*. Chriſt is the *Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt*. What the *Father* doth, the *Son* doth alſo in many reſpects: The *Father* created all things, ſo did the *Son:* and what the *Son* doth, the *Father* is ſaid to do, John 14. 10. *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works.*

It may not be amiſs here to tranſcribe a few Verſes from this Chapter, *John* 14. in order to give us a clearer Idea of this Union and Communion between the *Father* and *Chriſt*; ſince 'tis the deſign of our Lord in this Place to inſtruct *Thomas* and *Philip* in the knowledge of God the Father and of himſelf. John 14. 7—11. *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father alſo: And from henceforth ye know him and have ſeen him.* 8. *Philip ſaith unto him, Lord, ſhew*

us

us the Father, and it ſufficeth us. 9. *Jeſus ſaith unto him, Have I been ſo long time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? He that hath ſeen me hath ſeen the Father; and how ſayeſt thou, Shew us the Father?* 10. *Believeſt thou not, that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The Words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf: But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the Works.* 11. *Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or elſe believe me for the very Works ſake.* Upon this Scripture I beg leave to make theſe three Remarks.

Remark I. This is not ſpoken concerning the Union, the Inbeing, or Indwelling of any diſtinct *Divine Nature of Chriſt*, in the Divine Nature of the Father, but rather concerning the Union of his *Human Nature* to the ſame Godhead that is in the Father; and that for theſe three Reaſons.

1. Becauſe the Diſciples at this Time were not particularly acquainted with any diſtinct Divinity of Chriſt, and therefore he can't be ſuppoſed to ſpeak to them of this his Divinity, and tell them where it was, (*viz.*) in the Father. It was as Man that he converſed with them; but as a Man who had God ever with him, and he is now further explaining the Intimacy of this Union between God and Man in his own Perſon.

2. Tho' the Deity of Chriſt conſidered as

the *Eternal Word* or *Wiſdom of the Father* may be ſaid *to be* or *dwell in the Father*, yet God the Father is not ſaid *to be in his Wiſdom*, or to *dwell in his Wiſdom*; whereas this *Inbeing* and *Indwelling* of Chriſt and the Father are mutual in the Text, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me:* it denotes the Union of two really diſtinct Beings in one.

3. Becauſe *Chriſt* makes this his Union with the Father an Exemplar or Similitude of the Union of the Saints with God. John 17. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou Father, art in me and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us.* The Union and Communion between the Man *Jeſus* and *God the Father*, tho' 'tis vaſtly ſuperior to that of the Saints, yet 'tis ſtill voluntary and of meer Grace, and in this reſpect it may be properly made uſe of as a very glorious Exemplar of *our Union to God and Chriſt:* But the Inbeing of the Eternal *Word* or *Wiſdom* in the Father is ſo eſſential to Godhead, it ſo infinitely tranſcends all his voluntary and condeſcending Union to us, and is ſo infinitely different from it, that it does not ſeem to be a proper Exemplar or Pattern thereof. I much rather conclude therefore, that the Union here deſcribed is the Union between *God the Father* and the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, or between the ſame Divine Nature which is in the Father and the human Nature of *Chriſt*.

Remark

Remark II. *Jeſus Chriſt* neither in this Place nor in any other doth ever aſcribe his divine Works to any other divine Power of his own, or to any other Godhead of his own, diſtinct and different from the Godhead of the Father. *I live by the Father:* John 14. 19. *The Father is in me, and it is the Father in me that doth the Works.* John. 14. 10. It is but one Godhead of the Father and the Son; not two divine Natures or two Godheads, for this would ſeem to make two Gods. Nor has the *Holy Spirit* to whom ſometimes *Chriſt* aſcribes his Works, any Godhead different from that of the Father.

Remark III. Let it be obſerved further, that when our Saviour tells his Diſciples, and particularly informs *Thomas* and *Philip*, that by *ſeeing and knowing the Son, they ſee and know the Father alſo*, he does not give this Reaſon for it, (*viz.*) that he is the *very Image* of the Father, or the *Repreſentative* or the *Vicegerent* of the Father, tho' thoſe are great Truths: but he gives this Reaſon, that there is a moſt intimate *Union* or *Oneneſs* between the Father and him. *I am in the Father and the Father in me*: and ſo near and ſo intimate is this Union, that he attributes the *Words* which he ſpeaks and the *Works* which he does to the Father, ℣. 10. *i. e.* to the Godhead of the Father dwelling in him. Thus *Chriſt and his Father are one*, John 10. 30. One Godhead belongs to both.

From all this we may reaſonably infer, that when the Names, Titles and Works of the True and Eternal God are *prophetically* attributed to *Jeſus Chriſt* under the Old Teſtament, or *hiſtorically* in the New, 'tis not ſo much becauſe his Human Soul is the Image, Repreſentative or Deputy of the Father, as the *Arians* ſay; but becauſe the very Godhead of the Father dwells perſonally in the Man *Jeſus*: *the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*, ſo as on ſome Occaſions to give a ſufficient Ground for the Repreſentation of Chriſt as *God-Man*, or one complex Perſon including a Divine and Human Nature; tho' on other Occaſions *Chriſt* is repreſented as a *Man*, and is called *the Man Chriſt Jeſus the Mediator*, as in 1 *Tim.* 2. 5.

And as we find Divine Names and Characters are given to *Chriſt* at and after his Incarnation, becauſe the *Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt bodily in* the Man *Jeſus*, and thereby he became *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*; ſo before his Incarnation, when the *Angel of the Lord* who appeared to the Patriarchs calls himſelf the *Lord*, *God*, *Jehovah*, *God Almighty*, and *the God of Abraham*, we very reaſonably account for it in the ſame manner, (*viz.*) That the *Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him* ſpiritually, *i. e.* that there was the Human Spirit of our bleſſed Saviour in his Pre-exiſtent or Angelic State, inhabited by the Great and Almighty God, and compoſing as it were one complex

complex Perſon, one complex Intelligent Agent in thoſe Appearances.

Object. But does not this repreſent *Chriſt*, as being the *Father?* Doth not this ſuppoſe *God the Father* to be incarnate, which is contrary to the common Expreſſions of Scripture and Senſe of the Primitive Church?

Anſw. 1. Almoſt all the Proteſtant Writers that have been counted moſt *Orthodox* for ſome hundreds of Years paſt, both in Foreign Countries and at Home, have univerſally ſuppoſed the very *ſame numerical Godhead of the Father* to be the *Godhead of the Son*: and that it is the ſame infinite Spirit, the ſame Underſtanding and the ſame Will, which exiſts in the Father with one relative Property, that is alſo incarnate in the Son with another relative Property: Only they ſuppoſe the ſuperadded Idea or relative Property of *Fatherhood* is not incarnate, but the ſuperadded relative Property of *Sonſhip*. Now I can't reaſonably fear any juſt Cenſures from thoſe who follow this Doctrine of all our *Reformed* Predeceſſors, becauſe their Opinion comes ſo very near to, or rather is the ſame with what I have aſſerted, tho' they add ſome human Phraſes to it, of which I have not yet been able to attain any Ideas.

Anſw. 2. Tho' the *ſame numerical Godhead* belong to the *Father* and to the *Son*, yet 'tis not proper to ſay, *the Father is incarnate*, becauſe the Idea of *Fatherhood* ſuper-

added to the Godhead, includes the Idea of the prime Agent, and ſupreme Ruler in the divine Oeconomy; whereas the Idea of *Incarnation belongs* properly to one that is ſent in order to become a Mediator between God and Man, and this belongs properly to the *Son*, as I ſhall ſhew immediately.

Anſw. 3. Tho' in general we may ſuppoſe the very Godhead of the Father to be united to the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, according to theſe Expreſſions in the 10th and 14th of *John*, and elſewhere, yet ſome have ſuppoſed there are other Scriptures which repreſent *Chriſt* in his Divine Nature, as the *Word* or *Wiſdom* of the Father, as a peculiar eſſential Principle of Self-manifeſtation in the Divine Nature: and if Scripture does repreſent the *Great God* under the peculiar Idea or Character of his *Wiſdom* or *Word*, as manifeſting itſelf in Fleſh, 'tis not ſo proper to ſay, *God the Father was incarnate*, but that the *Word* or *Wiſdom* of *God was made Fleſh*, tho' the Godhead of the *Word* is the ſame with that of the *Father*; for the Wiſdom of God is God. But I inſiſt not on this Anſwer, and therefore proceed.

Anſw. 4. The pre-exiſtent Soul of Chriſt, in whom the Divine Nature or Godhead always dwelt, is properly the *Son of God*, derived from the Father before all Worlds, as his *only begotten Son, the Brightneſs of the Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.*

Perſon. And this glorious human Soul who lived many Ages in an angelic State, and was the *Angel of God's Preſence*, does ſeem to be the more immediate Subject of Incarnation. This *Son of God* properly took Fleſh upon him, and (ſhall I ſay) became as it were a *Medium*, in and by which the Divine Nature or Godhead was united to Fleſh and Blood. Thus *Chriſt* is properly called *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, becauſe true Godhead always dwelt in this human Soul, who is now incarnate: and he is properly called the *Son of God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, or *Chriſt come in the Fleſh*, becauſe this human Soul, who was properly the *Son of God*, was more immediately the Subject of Union to Fleſh and Blood. And thus the Expreſſions of St. *Paul* and St. *John* are reconciled, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. *God was manifeſt in the Fleſh:* and 1 *John* 3. 8. *The Son of God was manifeſted*; and 4. 2. *Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh.*

This ſort of Expoſition of theſe Texts wherein *Jeſus Chriſt* and God the *Father* are repreſented as *one*, or as mutually *in-being* and *in-dwelling* in each other, ſeems more exactly agreeable to the whole Tenor of Scripture, and beſt maintains the Unity of the Godhead, which is the Foundation of all Religion both natural and revealed; nor is it liable to thoſe Cavils, Objections and Inconveniences with which other Expoſitions are attended.

This Expoſition is free from thoſe Obſcurities which attend the *mutual in-being and in-dwelling* of the Father and the Son conſidered purely in their Divine Natures, which the Learned have called ἐμπεριχώρησις and *Circum-inceſſion*. We can hardly ſuppoſe our Saviour intended that Notion in *John* 14. 7, &c. becauſe 'tis a Notion ſo myſterious and ſublime beyond all the Ideas that *Philip* and *Thomas* could frame at that Seaſon: And therefore we cannot imagine that *Chriſt* would go to amuſe them with theſe Unſearchables, when they deſired ſome Inſtruction from him in the Knowledge of God the Father.

This Account of things plainly, intelligibly, and effectually ſecures true, proper, and eternal Deity to God the Father, and to our bleſſed Saviour, and that in two diſtinct Perſons, without introducing any other Godhead beſides the Godhead of the Father. Thus God the *Father* is the *only true God* originally, and yet *Jeſus* the *Son of God*, by Union to, and Communion in the Godhead of the Father, is alſo the *true God and the eternal Life*, 1 John 5. 20. And *this is eternal Life to know the* Father *the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*. John 17. 3.

Question VI.

Is Chriſt the expreſs Image of God the Father in the Human Nature, or in the Divine?

Answ. In the Human Nature.

In ſeveral Places of Scripture our Saviour is repreſented as the *Image of God*: 2 Cor. 4. 4. *Chriſt, who is the Image of God.* Col. 1. 15. *The Image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every Creature.* Heb. 1. 3. *The Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things.* Now 'tis an important Enquiry what is the Scripture Senſe in which *Jeſus Chriſt* is the *Image of God the Father.*

It has been the Cuſtom of many theological Writers to ſuppoſe *Chriſt* in his pure *divine Nature* to be this Image of the Father to which the Scripture refers: but there are ſome Reaſons which ſeem to oppoſe this Opinion, and incline me to withhold my Aſſent from it at preſent.

1.

1. That our Protestant Divines have almost universally supposed the Godhead or divine Nature of *Christ* to be the self-same, entire, numerical Godhead, Nature or Essence which the *Father* has, and differing only in his Personality or Manner of Subsistence, that is, *Filiation*; whereas the *Father's* Manner of Subsistence is *Paternity*. Now, according to this Doctrine, the divine Nature of *Christ* can neither be the Image of the Father in his *Essence*, nor in his *Personality* and Subsistence.

The divine Nature of *Christ* cannot be the Image of the Father's *Essence*, because it is numerically the very same Essence, and nothing is said to be the Image of itself.

Neither can the peculiar Subsistence or *Personality of Christ* as God, be the Image of the *Father's Personality* or Subsistence; for *Sonship* or *Filiation* is by no means an Image of *Paternity* or *Fatherhood*, but is rather the very reverse, or contrary to it. A *derived* Manner of Subsistence can never be the express Image of an *underived* Manner of Subsistence.

If therefore the Person of *Christ* considered as God, be the same numerical Godhead with the *Father*, together with a distinct Personality, that is *Filiation*, and if he is neither the Image of the *Father's Godhead* nor his *Personality*; then *Christ*, considered merely in his divine Nature, cannot be the express *Image of the Father*.

2.

2. Another Reaſon why *Chriſt* as God, is not the Image of God the Father, is becauſe he is called *the Image of the inviſible God.* Now the Godhead of *Chriſt* is as much *inviſible* as the Father's Godhead is; and therefore when he is called *the Image of the inviſible God*, it muſt ſignify, he is that Image whereby God becomes viſible, or is made known to Men; and for this Reaſon this Title of *Chriſt* muſt include ſuch a Nature in *Chriſt* whereby the *inviſible God* is made known to Mankind, that is, it muſt include ſomething of his inferior or human Nature, and perhaps has a prime Reference thereto.

3. When *Chriſt* is called the *Image of God* in ſome Scriptures, it would naturally lead us to conceive him diſtinct from, and in ſome Senſe inferior to that God whoſe Image he is; and therefore it doth as naturally lead one to conceive *Chriſt*'s Godhead is not denoted in thoſe Scriptures; for the Godhead of *Chriſt* and the *Father* is one, whereas the Image is ſomething inferior to the Original.

Let it be noted alſo, that every Man is called *the Image of God*, 1 Cor. 11. 7. And therefore this ſeems to be too low a Character of *Chriſt*, conſidered in his pure Godhead.

But there are three Senſes in which *Chriſt* is the moſt noble *Image of God.*

1. This Title moſt admirably agrees to *Chriſt* conſidered as *Man:* His human Soul is the firſt, the greateſt, the wiſeſt, the holieſt,

and the beſt of all created Spirits: The Man *Jeſus* is the wiſeſt, holieſt, and beſt of Men, formed after the Image of God in the greateſt Perfection; and probably his human Soul in his pre-exiſtent State was *the firſt-born of every Creature*, and *the beginning or chief of the Creation of God*, and who hath more of Reſemblance to God in all natural and in all moral Perfections than any Man ever had, or than the whole Creation beſides.

2. And if it be further conſidered that this glorious Man *Jeſus Chriſt* even in his pre-exiſtent, as well as in his incarnate State, is intimately united to his divine Nature, *i. e.* to the ſame Godhead that belongs to the Father, or to the eternal *Word* or *Wiſdom of God*; then the very Perfections of God himſelf ſhine through the *human Nature of Chriſt*, in a moſt reſplendent Manner: *Chriſt* as *God-man* is indeed the *Brightneſs of his Father's Glory*, and the moſt *expreſs Image of his Perſon*: and in this Senſe it may be granted that *Chriſt* is ſuch an Image of God as to be alſo God himſelf, *God manifeſt in the Fleſh, God over all bleſſed for ever.*

Thus far we have ſeen in what Senſe *Chriſt* may be called the *Image of God the Father*, in the very *Conſtitution of his Perſon*: Let us alſo now conſider him,

3. In his *Character of Mediator*; and ſo he becomes the *Image of the inviſible God* in yet a farther Senſe. He is the Father's *Ambaſſador*

Ambaſſador to us, and in that Senſe he is the Image of God, ſince he repreſents God among Men. He is alſo *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, veſted with a ſovereign Dominion over all things by the Appointment of the Father; and therefore he may be called the expreſs Image of his Father's Perſon, as he is *appointed Heir* and *Lord of all things*: And as *Adam* was the Image of God, in his Dominion over Creatures in this World, ſo *Chriſt* is a much more glorious Image of God the Father in his Dominion over the upper and lower Worlds.

Thus, tho' our bleſſed Saviour conſidered in his pure Godhead or divine Nature cannot be ſo properly called the *Image of the inviſible God*, or the *expreſs Image of the Father*, yet conſidered (1) as *Man*, (2) as *God-Man*, or (3) as *Mediator*, thoſe Aſcriptions may very properly belong to him.

NOTE, In another Treatiſe which will be publiſhed in a few Months, concerning *the Glory of Chriſt as God-man*, and the Pre-exiſtence of his human Soul, there will be an Abridgement of a larger Diſcourſe of the Reverend Dr. *Goodwin's*, concerning the Glories and Royalties of *Jeſus Chriſt* conſidered as *God-man*, and of his being the *expreſs Image of the Father*.

QUESTION

Question VII.

Are the Worſhip of God and his Son Jeſus Chriſt conſiſtent with one another?

1. God is a *Spirit*, i. e. a Being who has Underſtanding and Will; infinite in Knowledge, and in Power, and in every Perfection.

2. There is but one only living and true God, *i. e. one infinite Spirit.* And I expreſs myſelf thus, leſt if we ſuppoſe more infinite Spirits than one, we ſhould give occaſion to ſay, we believed more Gods than one. Three infinite Spirits ſeem to me to be three Gods.

3. This one true God is the only proper Object of divine or religious Worſhip. This Doctrine was aſſerted by *Moſes*, ſupported by the Prophets, and confirmed by the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf.

4. In the Scripture *Chriſt* expreſſly calls God *the Father* the *only true God*, as diſtinct from himſelf; *John* 17. 3. And the Apoſtle *Paul* confirms it, *To us there is but one God, even*

even the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things. 1 Cor. 8. 6.

5. *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the Son of God, is evidently repreſented in Scripture as another diſtinct Spirit different from God the Father, both before and after his Incarnation.

Before his Incarnation he had a diſtinct Conſciouſneſs or Underſtanding, whereby he knew and was conſcious of his own Appointment to various Services and his own Miſſion by the Father; he knew all the Offices he himſelf was to ſuſtain, the Fleſh and Blood he was to take upon him, and the Work that he was ſent to do by the Father's Appointment. Theſe perſonal Conſciouſneſſes of *Chriſt* are all different from the perſonal or individual Conſciouſneſſes of God the Father. *Chriſt* had alſo a diſtinct Will, different from the Father, whereby he conſented to what the Father's Will ordain'd concerning him, he accepted of the mediatorial Office at the Father's hand, and by his own Will ſubmitted to that Incarnation which the Will of the Father appointed for him: All this before he was actually incarnate. *Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God; a Body haſt thou prepared me.* Pſal. 40. Heb. 10.

As for his Appearance after his Incarnation, 'tis ſufficiently evident he is another diſtinct Spirit, different from the true and eternal God the Father; for he was conſcious of his wearing

wearing Fleſh and Blood, and of all the Senſations of Hunger, Thirſt and Pain, which he derived thence: He was then compleat Man in Body and Soul, who knew and worſhipped and obeyed his Father and his God. His own Words confirm this: *I came not to do mine own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me. Father, not my Will, but thine be done.*

6. Yet this Son of God often appears in Scripture as the Object of divine or religious Worſhip. 'Tis thus in ſome Places of the Old Teſtament, when he appeared as the *Angel of God's Preſence*; for *Abraham*, *Moſes* and *Joſhua* worſhipped him as the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, and as *Jehovah*, and as the Captain of the Hoſt of the Lord: and in *Pſal.* 45. 11. we are required to worſhip him; *He is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.*

And that we have ſeveral Examples of Worſhip paid to our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* in the New Teſtament, eſpecially after his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, is evident from the Writings of the Evangeliſts and the Apoſtles. St. *Stephen* worſhipped him, *Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit*, Acts 7. and St. *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. *For this I beſought the Lord thrice.* And all the Saints and Angels in Heaven *do worſhip him*, Rev. 5. 12, 13.

7. Thence it muſt follow that *Jeſus Chriſt* the Son of God, tho' he be a diſtinct Spirit,

yet

yet he muſt be ſome way one with the true and eternal God, that he may be a proper Object of religious or divine Worſhip. Thus he expreſſes himſelf, *John* 10. 30. *I and my Father are one.* He muſt be ſome way the ſame God, or the ſame infinite Spirit with the Father, while he is alſo another diſtinct inferior Spirit, different from the Father.

8. Scripture does not teach us to conceive how this can be, but by ſo near an Union between this ſupreme or infinite Spirit and the inferior or finite Spirit, as may conſtitute one compounded Perſon, one complex Agent or Principle of Action, one complex Object of Honour, *i. e. God and Man.* And thus the Son of God ſeems to be repreſented often in Scripture as a complex Perſon, or as two diſtinct Spirits or Beings in a perſonal Union.

In the Old Teſtament he is the *Man* who converſed with *Abraham* and who wreſtled with *Jacob*; he is the *Angel of the Covenant*, the *Angel in whom the Name of God is*, the *Angel of the Preſence of God*, or a *Meſſenger ſent from God*, and yet he is alſo the *Jehovah*, the *God of Abraham and Iſaac*, the *I am that I am*. He is ſpoken of as the *Child born, the Son given*; and yet the *mighty God*, and *the Holy One* whom the Angels adore.

He is repreſented alſo in the New Teſtament as the Man that died, roſe, and aſcended to Heaven; and alſo as the *Jehovah* or *God of Iſrael*, who is deſcribed in the 68th *Pſal.*

compared with *Epheſ.* 4. as *aſcending on high, leading Captivity captive, and receiving Gifts for Men.* He is God *manifeſt in the Fleſh*, or a Man *in whom dwells all the Fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.* He is the *Word who was with God, who was God*, and *who was made Fleſh, and tabernacled among Men.* 2 *Col.* 9. *John* 1. 1, 14. and 1 *Tim.* 3. 16.

Now this near, intimate and unſpeakable Union between the Man *Jeſus* and one eternal *God* lays a ſufficient Foundation for divine Names, Titles, Attributes, Worſhip and Honours to be aſcribed to *Jeſus Chriſt* the Son of God. *He and the Father are one, John* 10. 30. *i. e.* ſo united, that one Godhead is in both by this Union. *He is in the Father and the Father in him. 'Tis the Father in him that doth his* wondrous *Works.* John 14. 10. *He was in the beginning with the Father: The Word was with God, and the Word was God*, John 1. 1.

9. With regard to the *bleſſed Spirit of God*, tho' I think true Godhead is aſcribed to him, and perſonal Actions are ſometimes attributed to him in Scripture, yet as we are not expreſſly, plainly, and particularly inform'd, whether he be a really diſtinct Principle or Power in God, or has a proper diſtinct Perſonality of himſelf, ſo neither are we expreſſly required to worſhip him in any Text of the Bible that I can find. Nevertheleſs, as divine Attributes and Actions, and ſometimes

times perſonal Characters are aſcribed to the Spirit of God in the Language of Scripture, I think the Reaſon of things ſufficiently authorizes and allows religious or divine Worſhip to be paid to him, tho' we may not preciſely know the Manner how he is God, or how far he is a diſtinct Perſon.

10. What particular Diſtinctions may be in the Godhead or Divine Nature itſelf, and how great theſe Diſtinctions may be, Scripture does not ſo evidently aſſert, nor ſo clearly explain them to us. And in this place I would not on the one hand go beyond Scripture, nor on the other hand would I talk without Ideas. But ſo far as I have repreſented this Matter of Divine Worſhip, I think there are Ideas, and thoſe borrow'd from Scripture too, which go along with my Words all the way; and I muſt acknowledge this is the cleareſt Conception I can arrive at in repreſenting this Subject, after many Years Study of the Scripture and much Prayer for divine Inſtruction.

11. If we could once perſuade ourſelves to try to read every Scripture that relates to the Doctrine of the Trinity as placed in this Light, without any prejudicate Opinions derived from other human Schemes, I think that Doctrine would be found much more eaſy and intelligible than it is generally made; and the Worſhip of the *only true God* would ſtand aſcertained and confirmed; and yet *Jeſus Chriſt*

the Son of God being one with the Father, or being God and Man in one complex Perſon, might become the Object of religious Worſhip, according to the Repreſentations of Scripture, and without any Offence to human Reaſon.

12. If this be the true State of things, then the *one eternal God* abides ſtill the only Object of Worſhip; whether he be conſidered as abſolute in himſelf under the Character of the *Father of all*, or as united to the Man *Jeſus Chriſt*, and dwelling in him by a perſonal Union. Thus the Father and the Son are both worſhipped, but when the Son is worſhipped, 'tis as *one with the Father*, and *to the Glory of the Father*, Phil. 2. 11.

And among other Reaſons this is one, *why it has pleaſed the Father that all the Fulneſs of the Godhead ſhould dwell in him bodily*, Col. 2. 9. that being ſo nearly united to God, or one with him, he might be a proper Object of Divine Worſhip together with the Father. *Rev.* 5. 14. *Bleſſing and Honour, Glory and Power be to him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever.*

QUESTION VIII.

What is the Worſhip paid to our Bleſſed Saviour, who is the Image of God?

Prop. I. THERE is ſomething in the Reaſon and Nature of Man that directs and inclines him to own and worſhip ſome God, or ſome ſuperior Being, from whom himſelf and all his Enjoyments are derived, and on whom his Expectations depend.

Prop. II. Reaſon and Revelation conſpire to teach us that there is but one true God.

Prop. III. This one true God has required expreſſly in his Word, that he alone ſhould be the Object of our Worſhip or religious Homage: and 'tis ſeveral times repeated with much Solemnity in the Old Teſtament and in the New.

Prop. IV. There is ſomething in the Nature of Man that inclines him to reverence and reſpect the Image of that Being which he worſhips: And the reaſon is evident; becauſe the Image is ſuppoſed to be ſomething more

within the reach of his Senſes, and therefore more ſuited to his Bodily Nature, than God who is the ſpiritual and unſeen Object of his Worſhip: Or at leaſt, becauſe he can have the Image ſenſibly preſent with him when he has not the Original: and the Image being ſuppoſed to have the Likeneſs or Reſemblance of the original Object of Worſhip, it refreſhes the Memory and brings to mind the Excellencies of the Divine Original.

If we love or honour a Friend, a Father, or a King, we deſire to have their Pictures or Images near us, we pay a ſort of Eſteem, Love and Veneration to thoſe Pictures, upon the account of their Likeneſs to the original Perſons: and we alſo pay our Eſteem, Love and Veneration to the abſent Original by the Means or Medium of theſe Pictures.

'Tis from this Principle that the *Heathens* in all Nations, who have worſhipped the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, or their *Kings*, *Heroes* and *Anceſtors*, have generally made Pictures and Images of them, and either reverenced and worſhipped the Images or worſhipped the Originals in and by thoſe Images, or both. And for this Reaſon, in the corrupt *Antichriſtian* State, they did not only *worſhip the Beaſt with ſeven Heads and ten Horns, but they made an Image thereof and worſhipped it.* Rev. 13.

Prop. V. God has expreſſly forbidden Men to make any Image of himſelf and worſhip it,

it, or even to make it a *Medium* of paying their religious Homage and Worſhip to himſelf. The ſecond Command is moſt expreſs in this Matter; and this is in general eſteemed by all Proteſtant Writers to be the plain Senſe of that Commandment: And one chief reaſon of the Command is becauſe Mankind is ſo prone by Nature to worſhip Images which they have made themſelves.

Prop. VI. God himſelf has never ſhewn or given us any expreſs Image of himſelf but one, and that is his own well-beloved Son *Jeſus Chriſt.* Heb. 1. 2. *He is the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.* He is *the Image of God,* 2 Cor. 4. 4. And in Col. 1. 15. *He is the Image of the inviſible God.* Now this Expreſſion ſeems to have a prime reference to his Human Nature; or (as the Learned and Pious Dr. *Goodwin* aſſerts and proves) it muſt at leaſt include his human Nature in it, becauſe every thing that relates directly to the Divine Nature of *Chriſt* is as *inviſible* as God the *Father,* and therefore his Divine Nature conſidered alone would never have been ſo particularly deſcribed as the *Image of the Inviſible God.*

Prop. VII. The great God himſelf has required us to make this his Image the *Medium* of our Worſhip paid to him. Eph. 2. 18. *By him we have acceſs unto the Father.* Col. 3. 17. *Give thanks to God even the Father*

by him. And he alſo requires Men and Angels to worſhip this his Image. John 5. 23. *That all Men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.* Heb. 1. 6. *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* Thus far has the bleſſed God indulged or incouraged that natural Inclination in Man to reverence the Image of that divine Being which he worſhips.

Prop. VIII. To this End it has pleaſed the great God in a ſpecial manner to aſſume into the neareſt Union with himſelf this his own Son, and thereby to render him a more compleat Image of himſelf: Thus the Son, who is *the expreſs Image of the Father and the Brightneſs* or Splendor *of his Glory*, is alſo one with the Father, as *Chriſt* expreſſes it, John 14. 10. *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father:* And the reaſon he gives is this, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* John 10. 30. *I and my Father are one*, i. e. by this Union, as 'tis explain'd ℣. 38. And this is done not only to render him capable of his glorious Offices, but of divine Honours too; that *Jeſus Chriſt* might be worſhipt, and yet that according to God's original Command, that which is not God might not be made the Object of our Worſhip.

Since there cannot be more Gods than one, and ſince proper Deity could not be communicated to the Man *Jeſus*, who is the Image of the Inviſible God, to render him a partaker of our Worſhip any other way, therefore

proper

proper Deity is united to him, that he might be *one with God.* And thus as the *Word who was God was made Fleſh*, John. 1. 1, 14. by his perſonal Union to Fleſh, ſo the Man *Jeſus* may be ſaid to *become God* or to be God, by his perſonal Union to God.

Thus the human Nature of Chriſt being a Creature moſt like to God, and being inhabited alſo by Godhead, is the brighteſt Image of the inviſible God, and is one with God himſelf, and that as our Divines expreſs it by a *Perſonal Union:* And thus he is taken into as much Participation of that Worſhip which Men pay to God, as a Creature is capable of receiving, and as the original Law of *worſhipping none but God* can admit. See Diſſertation III. from pag. 92. to the end.

Prop. IX. When the ancient *Heathens* worſhipped the Images of their Gods, the beſt way they could ever take to vindicate it was under this Notion, that they ſuppoſed their Gods to inhabit their own Images, and thus they worſhipped the Image together with their God dwelling in the Image: But with far better Authority and with infinitely more Juſtice and Truth may Chriſtians worſhip the Son of God who is the only appointed Image of the only true God, ſubſiſting in a perſonal Union with the indwelling Godhead.

Prop. X. This may be illuſtrated by a very lively Similitude. A vaſt hollow Globe of Cryſtal, as large as the Sun, is in itſelf a fair

Image

Image or Reſemblance of the Sun: But if we might ſuppoſe the Sun itſelf included in this Cryſtal Globe, it would thereby become a much brighter and nobler Image of the Sun, and it would be in a Senſe *one with the Sun* itſelf, or *one complex Being*. And thus the ſame honourable Aſcriptions which are given to the Sun becauſe of his Light and Heat, might be given alſo to this Cryſtal Globe conſidered as inhabited by the Sun itſelf, which could not be done without this Inhabitation.

Then whatſoever Honours were paid to this Globe of Cryſtal would redound to the Honour of the Sun, even as the Divine Honour and Adoration paid to our Bleſſed Saviour ariſes from the perſonal Union of the human Nature with the divine, and finally redounds to the Glory of God. *Phil.* 2. 11.

Let it be obſerved here, that tho' I borrow an Emblem or a Reſemblance of this Divine Doctrine from the World of *Nature* or from the *Heathen* Nations, yet the Doctrine it ſelf is entirely derived from Scripture, and might eaſily be confirmed by many more Citations out of the Sacred Writers.

AN

ESSAY

On the

True IMPORTANCE of any HUMAN SCHEMES

To Explain the Sacred

Doctrine of the Trinity.

SHEWING,

I. THAT no ſuch Scheme of EXPLICATION is neceſſary to Salvation.

II. THAT it may yet be of great Uſe to the Chriſtian Church.

III. BUT all ſuch EXPLICATIONS ought to be propoſed with Modeſty to the World, and never impoſed on the Conſcience.

SECTION I.

THE firſt of theſe Points is already argued in a Diſcourſe on the *Chriſtian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Prop. XV. and we only take leave here to mention thoſe Heads of Argument, and to enlarge a little on the ſame Subject.

1. *Any particular Explication of the ſcriptural Doctrine of the Trinity can never be neceſſary to Salvation*, becauſe, tho' the Doctrine itſelf of three perſonal Characters which have Communion in one Godhead, be clearly revealed, yet the *Modus* how *they are one, and how they are three, is not clearly and plainly revealed.* And indeed if this *Modus* be revealed at all in Scripture, yet 'tis in ſo obſcure a manner, that we can come at it only by laborious Reaſonings and a train of difficult Conſequences; whereas all neceſſary Articles are and muſt be clear and plain; and if they are not contain'd in expreſs Words, yetthey muſt lie open and obvious to a natural and eaſy Inference.

2. Any particular Explication of this Myſtery is not neceſſary to Salvation, becauſe *the moſt pious as well as the wiſeſt and moſt learned*

learned Chriſtians have had very different Sentiments on this Subject, and *gone into different Schemes of Explication*; and that in the ſeveral Ages of Chriſtianity, as well as in our preſent Age. The very Mention of the venerable Names and Opinions of Dr. *Cudworth*, Biſhop *Bull*, Biſhop *Stillingfleet*, Biſhop *Fowler*, Biſhop *Pearſon*, Dr. *Waltis*, Dr. *Owen*, and Mr. *Howe*, is ſufficient to confirm this ſecond Reaſon.

3. *We may pay all due Honours to the Sacred Three, which are required in Scripture, while we believe them to be repreſented as three perſonal Agents, and as one in Godhead, without any particular Explication how they are One, and how they are Three.*

Now 'tis evident that Scripture hath more directly and expreſſly laid our Salvation upon the ſpecial divine Characters or Offices which the Father, Son and Spirit ſuſtain in the Bible, and upon the peculiar Bleſſings which we derive from them, and the peculiar Honours to be paid to them, rather than upon any nice Explication of their intimate Eſſence and Union, their Nature and Difference; and therefore ſuch a nice Explication is not of neceſſity to Salvation.

It is evident to me, that divine and religious Aſcriptions and Honours are paid to the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Spirit* in Scripture, and I think they are due to them all. Now how theſe divine Honours can be paid by any who

who deny them to have ſome true and proper Communion in the Eternal Godhead, I can't well underſtand. But I can eaſily conceive that divine Honour may be given them without knowing exactly the preciſe Points and Boundaries of their Union and Diſtinction. See more in *Chriſtian Doctrine of the Trinity*, Prop. XXI.

Do we not find it ſufficient in all the common Affairs of Life, to manage a thouſand Concerns wiſely with regard to the human *Soul* and *Body*, and with regard to each particular Being of the *Animal*, the *Vegetable*, and the *Intellectual* World, if we do but juſt know whether it be an *Animal*, a *Vegetable*, or an *Intellectual* Being, without any determinate, philoſophical Notions and Ideas of the Eſſences and ſpecifick Differences of all, or any of theſe, and without determining how far they agree, and how far they differ? And why may it not be ſo in the Affairs of Religion? He may be a very *wiſe Man*, and diſpoſe and direct his Affairs admirably well with regard to his *King*, his *Biſhop*, his Father and his Friend, by that *common and general* Knowledge which he hath of their Capacities and Powers, their ſeveral Offices and the Relations they ſtand in *to him*, without any preciſe Acquaintance with their particular *natural Conſtitutions*, or the Relations they ſtand in *to one another*. He may be a moſt diſcreet Manager of his Affairs, and ſpeak and do all Things

Things in *proper Time and Place*, without knowing philoſophically what *Place* is, or what is *Time*: and he can be contented with this Ignorance, and be a *wiſe* Man ſtill. And why may he not be a *Chriſtian* with the ſame Degrees of Knowledge of the things of *Chriſtianity*, i. e. without philoſophical Science of the abſtract Nature of God and Chriſt.

A poor Labourer or a Shepherd believes *Jeſus Chriſt* to have the *proper divine Powers* of knowing, managing and governing all things; therefore he prays to him, and truſts in him *as his Lord* and his God, without any Notion either of *Self-exiſtence* and *Independency*, or without the leaſt thought of *conſubſtantial Generation*, *eternal Sonſhip*, and *neceſſary Emanation from the Father*; all which Ideas ſome Writers include in the Divine Nature of Chriſt, tho' perhaps without any ſufficient Authority from Scripture. He believes him to be the true God, and *Son of God*, and the *appointed Mediator* to bring him to God; therefore he honours and adores him, and depends on him under that Character, without any Notion whether his *Sonſhip* belong to his *Human* or *Divine Nature*. He believes him alſo to be the *Son of Man*, but perhaps he may not ever have heard whether he had an *earthly Father* or no, or that he was the *Son of a pure Virgin*. Now what is there in all this Ignorance that forbids him to be a *true Chriſtian* and a *ſound Believer?* But

But I would purſue this Argument a little, under ſome more parallel Inſtances.

The learned World well knows what corporeal Notions the famous ancient Father *Tertullian* had of the Soul of Man; what immaterial and refined Opinions *Des Cartes* and his Followers have entertained concerning the Preſence or Place of Spirits; and what were the contrary Sentiments of Dr. *Henry More* and his Admirers.

Now may not a *Tertullianiſt* take proper care for the Salvation of his Soul, tho' he thinks the Nature of it be *Corporeal?* May not the Soul of a *Carteſian* find the right Way to Heaven, tho' he believes his Soul has no Relation to Place, and *exiſts no where*, or *in no certain Place?* May he not worſhip *God* with Acceptance in Spirit and in Truth, tho' he conceive God himſelf, as an infinitely wiſe and powerful Mind void of all Extenſion, and who hath *no relation to Place?* and tho' he ſuppoſe his *Omnipreſence* to be nothing elſe but his *univerſal Knowledge and Power and Agency*, thro' all Times and Places? And may not a *Moriſt* with the ſame Acceptance worſhip the ſame *God*, tho' he believes him to be *infinitely extended* and penetrating all Bodies and all poſſible Spaces?

What is there in theſe philoſophical Particularities, that forbids a Man to be truly pious, while he believes his Soul to have an

immortal Being after this Life, and while he ſuppoſes God to have all the requiſite Properties and Powers for a Creator and Governor, and Judge of the World?

You will ſay, ſome of theſe Perſons hold groſs Inconſiſtencies, and believe Impoſſibles, while they ſuppoſe a *corporeal Soul to be immortal*; or a *God infinitely extended thro' Length, Breadth and Depth, who is a pure Spirit*; and therefore ſuch a *Soul* cannot be *immortal*, and ſuch a *God* cannot *know*, or *govern* or *judge*.

I *anſwer*, It may poſſibly be ſo: Theſe may be great Inconſiſtencies; and yet a Man may ſincerely believe them both, who does not ſee the Inconſiſtency of them. And if we muſt be condemned to Hell for believing Inconſiſtencies, then Wo be to every Son and Daughter of *Adam*. What Man is there in the World free from all Error? And yet every Error which he holds, is perhaps inconſiſtent with ſome Truth which he believes: It's hard to write *Anathema* upon a Man's Forehead, becauſe of ſome Inconſiſtence in his Opinions, while he believes all neceſſary Truths, and practiſes all the neceſſary Duties relating to God and Chriſt, and his own Soul.

You may perhaps *object* and ſay, That he that believes the Soul to be corporeal, by Conſequence does not believe it to be immortal; or he that believes God to be infinitely extended in Length and Breadth, by Conſequence does

does not believe God to be a ſpiritual Being, who can know and judge human Affairs: and thus in the ſame manner by the Conſequence of his own Suppoſitions, the Man that holds theſe Doctrines may perhaps be proved to be a *Brute* and an *Atheiſt*.

I *reply*, And muſt all the Conſequences that can be drawn from the Miſtakes of any Man be imputed to that Man as his own Opinions? This would make dreadful Work in the Chriſtian Church. The *Arminian* would reduce the *Calviniſt* into *Blaſphemy* and *Atheiſm*; and likewiſe the *Calviniſt* the *Arminian*. By this uncharitable Method each of them would be called *Atheiſts* and *Blaſphemers*, and be utterly excluded from Chriſtian Communion by ſuch a perverſe Practice as this.

I would add yet further, that by ſuch uncharitable Conſtructions as theſe, The *Carteſian* Chriſtian might ſay, I can't join in Worſhip with Dr. *More*, and his Followers, for we have not the *ſame Object of Worſhip*: I worſhip a God who is a pure Spirit, a pure thinking Being, without Extenſion or Dimenſion; but they worſhip a Being infinitely extended, *i. e.* infinitely long, broad and deep. The *Moriſt* might cry with the ſame Zeal, I cannot worſhip with a *Carteſian*, for we worſhip not the ſame Object: He adores a God that is properly in no Place; but I worſhip that God who penetrates all Things and Places, and is expanded thro' all.

Now if ſuch Objections as theſe are indulged and ſupported, no two Perſons could join together in any part of Divine Worſhip who had ſuch different Ideas of the Divine Eſſence or Attributes, leſt they ſhould imagine they worſhip two diſtinct or different Deities. And if this were admitted, where could we find two Perſons who had ſo exactly the ſame Ideas of God as to hold Communion in one Worſhip?

This wretched Practice of imputing all the diſtant Conſequences of any Man's Opinions or Miſtakes to him, is quite contrary to our Saviour's *general Rule*, Matt. 7. 12. *What you would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them.* Let theſe *Objectors* be pleaſed to conſider that doubtleſs they themſelves in ſome Parts of their Religion are guilty of ſome Errors or Miſtakes in their Opinions; for no Man's Knowledge is perfect: and if thoſe Errors ſhould be puſhed home to their utmoſt Conſequences, perhaps they might terminate in *Blaſphemy*, *Atheiſm*, or mere *Nonſenſe*: But no Man would be willing to be treated in this manner himſelf, (*viz.*) to have all the utmoſt Conſequences of his miſtaken Opinions be imputed to him, therefore he ought not to treat his Brothers ſo; according to that univerſal Rule, *What ye would that Men ſhould do unto you, that do ye alſo to them.*

Now to apply theſe things to the preſent Caſe. Suppoſe,

Suppoſe, for Inſtance, *Timon* and *Pithus* both believe *Chriſt to be the true God:* but *Timon* ſuppoſes him not to be *Self-exiſtent*, becauſe he ſaith, he is a *Son*, derived from the Father by an *Eternal Generation.* On the other hand, *Pithus* believes him to be *Self-Exiſtent*, becauſe he is *God.* Now has *Pithus* Reaſon to ſay, that becauſe *Timon* doth not believe the *Self-Exiſtence* of Chriſt, therefore by Conſequence he does not believe his Divinity? Or, ſhould *Timon* be permitted to conclude, that becauſe *Pithus* believes the Self-Exiſtence of Chriſt, therefore by Conſequence he does not believe his *Sonſhip?* Would it be agreeable either to the Reaſon of a Man, or to the Charity of a Chriſtian, that theſe two Men ſhould anathematize one another, or ſeclude each other from Chriſtian Communion becauſe of the Conſequences of their Opinions, while they both profeſs to maintain that *Jeſus Chriſt* is the Son of God, and has ſuch Communion in and with the Eternal Godhead, as that both of them profeſs him to be *true God*, and both pay him Divine Worſhip.

Now what I would infer from hence is this, that ſince the different Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity may be ſo abuſed to give ſuch Occaſions for Conteſt, where Chriſtians are not wiſe and charitable, I would rather exclude all the particular Modes of Explication from the *Terms of Chriſtian*

Communion, than I would exclude one Chriſtian from the *Church of Chriſt*. Where a Man profeſſes that there is but one God, and yet that *Father, Son and Spirit*, have ſuch a Diſtinction from each other, and ſuch a Communion in and with this one Godhead as renders them all-ſufficient for the Characters and Offices which they ſuſtain in the Goſpel, and pays proper Honours to them accordingly, I would never conſtrain him to determine any farther upon thoſe difficult Points of the *Union* and *Diſtinction* of the Sacred Three; of the *Self-Exiſtence*, the *Eternal Generation*, or *Eternal Proceſſion* of the *Son* and *Holy Spirit*. Nor whether they are *three Natures* united in one Godhead, or whether *one individual Nature only*.

To ſum up the whole, 'tis evident to me, that the Holy Scripture itſelf, as I have already proved elſewhere, lays the Streſs of our Salvation upon a Belief that *Chriſt* is the *Meſſiah*, the appointed all-ſufficient Saviour, a Truſt in the proper Atonement or Sacrifice of *Chriſt* for the Forgiveneſs of Sins, a Dependence on his Grace and Spirit for Light and Holineſs, and a Submiſſion to his Government, much more than it does upon any preciſe and exact Notions or Hypotheſes concerning his *Divine and his Human Nature*; even tho' the Union of the *Divine* and the *Human* Nature in him are in my Judgement neceſſary to render his Salvation compleat.

Scripture

Scripture teaches us to concern ourſelves about *Regeneration* and *Grace* to be received from the *Bleſſed Spirit*, more than about the *Nature* or *Eſſence of that Spirit* which regenerates us. It makes our eternal Intereſt depend upon the glorious Characters, Offices and Operations of the Three Perſons of the *Bleſſed Trinity*, and our reſpective Honours paid to them, rather than upon our philoſophical and exact Acquaintance with their inmoſt Eſſence or Eſſences, and their perſonal Diſtinctions. I muſt believe that the Great God will make merciful Allowances to ſincere Souls for their different Sentiments, or for their Ignorance and Darkneſs in ſo ſublime and myſterious an Article, which almoſt all Parties allow to contain ſome Unknowables and Unconceivables in it.

SECTION II.

YET where God is pleaſed to give greater Degrees of Light and Knowledge, if we can further explain theſe Myſteries of Chriſtianity in clear Ideas and proper Language, it is a piece of excellent Service done to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

A clear and happy Explication in what manner the *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Spirit* are to be conceived as *three Perſonal Agents*, and as having Communion in *one Godhead*, would carry in it many deſirable Advantages.

1. This would be like a Ray of ſacred Light let into ſome of the moſt dark and difficult Paſſages of the Word of God. This would help us to unfold many Scriptures which at preſent lie ſealed in Obſcurity; or at leaſt it would afford us the true Senſe of ſeveral Texts which by reaſon of the various Expoſitions of them have hitherto given but an uncertain Sound and doubtful Notices of Divine Truth. It would clear up a large part of the Word of God to our Underſtandings, and teach us to read the ſacred Tranſactions of the *Father*, *Son* and *Spirit* in the Bible with more abundant Edification.

2. This might teach us to perform our various Duties of Adoration, Faith, Love, and Obedience to the *ſacred Three*, ſo far as *Scripture* requires it, in a more diſtinct and rational manner than we have hitherto done. The humble Chriſtian would view and adore his heavenly *Father*, his *Saviour* and his *Sanctifier* with much more inward Pleaſure, when he ſhould be enabled to do it with much clearer and more explicit Ideas of their divine Unity and Diſtinction.

3. Such a happy Explication of the Myſtery of the *Bleſſed Trinity* would vindicate this Doctrine againſt the Cavils of the Unbeliever as well as againſt the Scoffery and Inſults of the prophane World. This would make it appear how the *Son* and the *Spirit* might be true God without injury to the Divine Honour of *God the Father*.

There

There have been ſome *Antitrinitarian* Writers who have deny'd the Poſſibility of the Godhead of the *Son* and *Spirit* in any *Senſe* or *Modus* at all; and have pretended to prove that every Model and Manner of Explication of this Doctrine hath ſome Abſurdity and Inconſiſtency belonging to it. Now it would be certainly of conſiderable Service to the Truth to exhibit ſome Scheme, ſome Manner of Explication to the World, wherein it is fairly conſiſtent with the Reaſon of Things and the Language of Scripture, that the *Son* and *Spirit* may have communion in true Godhead as well as the *Father:* And that tho' there be but *one God*, yet the divine Names and Attributes may be aſcribed to the *Sacred Three*, as having Communion in this one Godhead.

4. This would be a glorious means of vindicating the *Proteſtant* Religion againſt the Charges which are brought by the *Papiſts*, who tell us, that we refuſe their Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* becauſe it ſeems inconſiſtent to Senſe and Reaſon, and yet we believe the Doctrine of the *Trinity* which is charged with the ſame Inconſiſtency. We often find fault with them for making the Words *Myſtery* and *Supernatural* an *Aſylum* and Refuge whereby to ſcreen themſelves from the Charge of a moſt abſurd Opinion, that is, of *Bread becoming Fleſh*, and *yet retaining the Properties of Bread at the ſame time.*

They

They in the like manner find fault with us for making the ſame Words *Myſtery* and *Supernatural* a Refuge for our ſelves while we profeſs *Three diſtinct Perſons in one God.*

I confeſs there are many things to be ſaid, and that with great Juſtice, to vindicate the Conduct of *Proteſtant* Writers in the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, which can never ſerve to defend the *Popiſh* Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*: for one is a Theme or Subject that concerns the deep things of the Divine Nature; the other relates but to Fleſh and Bread, which are Objects that fall entirely within the Compaſs of our Senſes and our reaſoning Powers; and we can much better judge and determine *what is* and *what is not* a real Inconſiſtency in the one than in the other.

Yet after all it would be a vaſt Advantage in the Defence of our Religion againſt the Aſſaults of the *Papiſts*, and it would vindicate Chriſtianity moſt glorioufly in the Eyes of *Jews*, *Heathens* and all *Infidels*, if we could find ſome plain, eaſy, natural and obvious Account of this matter how the *Sacred Three* which are repreſented in Scripture under diſtinct Perſonal Characters have a communion in one Godhead.

5. I add farther, that if it were poſſible to exhibit a Scheme of Explication which ſhould be ſo plain, ſo eaſy, ſo agreeable to the Light of Nature, and yet ſo happily correſpondent with

with Scripture as to captivate the Aſſent of the Learned and Unlearned at the very Propoſal of it, what a glorious advantage would the Church of *Chriſt* obtain by this means towards its Unity and Peace! What a Bleſſed End would be put to thoſe ſhameful Quarrels and Contentions on this Subject, that have in every Age more or leſs divided the Chriſtian World and laid it bleeding with many Wounds?

There are ſome difficult parts of our Holy Religion which have been ſo far explained by the united Labours and Prayers of pious and learned Men, that Controverſies about them are well nigh ceaſed and the Diſputes brought to an end. The humble Believer has been enlightened and taught to underſtand the Articles which he profeſſes: The prophane Caviller and the ſubtil Critick have been baffled by the meer Force of Argument ſet in a clear and eaſy Light: and why may we not hope for the ſame Succeſs in this ſacred Article of the *Trinity*, by humble and laborious Enquiries into the Word of God, with a dependance on the Aids of the Divine Spirit, who is promiſed *to guide us into all Truth?*

It muſt be acknowledged indeed, there has no publick received Scheme been yet ſo ſucceſsful to explain this Doctrine but what has ſeveral Difficulties attending it, and has left too much room for the Cavil of Unbelievers. Nor have any of theſe Schemes hitherto very much aſſiſted the unlearned Chriſtian in the

Practice

Practice of his Devotions, or bleſt him with much clearer and juſter Ideas of the matter than his own reading of the Bible had given him before.

And it muſt be confeſt alſo with Sorrow and Shame, that ſome Writers have invented or enlarged ſpecial Explications of the ſacred Doctrine with too great a Neglect of Scripture in their Studies. They have affected to be wiſe in Words without Ideas. They have ſet forth their own Learned Explications of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, in ſounding Scholaſtic Phraſes and hard Words, with great aſſurance; and have helped Men to talk roundly on this ſublime Subject with a great Exuberance and Fluency of ſuch Language as has been eſtabliſht into Orthodoxy. This ſacred Doctrine has been too often dreſt up by Authors in abundance of *Metaphyſical Phraſes* borrowed from the *Popiſh Schools*, but without any clearer Conceptions of the Truth than their primitive Predeceſſors had attained, or than their meaner Brethren poſſeſs without that learned Language.

But tho' nothing has hitherto been done ſo effectually as one could wiſh, to remove all Difficulty and Confuſion, yet he is a bold Man that will venture to lay an everlaſting Bar upon our fervent Prayers and humble Study of the Scripture, and upon all the Labours and Hopes of the preſent and future Chriſtian Ages, meerly becauſe the Ages paſt have

have not been favoured with thoſe happy Hints whereby to unfold theſe ſacred Myſteries, and to reconcile the Difficulties that attend them.

SECTION III.

BUT after all, whatſoever Light or Knowledge we may ſuppoſe ourſelves to have attained in the Explication of this ſublime Doctrine, we ought not to be over-ſolicitous to proſelyte other Chriſtians to our particular Scheme; much leſs to impoſe it on the Conſciences of others: We ſhould ever take care leſt by anxious Enquiries into things leſs neceſſary, we ſhould unhappily divert ourſelves or others from thoſe Duties and practical Regards, which we all owe to the Father, Son and Spirit, and which all Parties agree to be neceſſary to Salvation.

It is an important Leſſon both of natural and revealed Religion, that we ſhould lay out our greateſt Concern and Zeal on things of the greateſt Conſequence: and we have already proved, that it is of much higher Moment to wait for divine Benefits from the Sacred Three, and to pay our proper reſpective Honours to the *Sacred Three*, ſo far as Scripture requires it, than to know how far they are the ſame, and how far they are diſtinguiſhed. Indeed when we have arrived at

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any farther Light in ſome divine Doctrine, we ourſelves may find greater Clearneſs of Thought, with more Eaſe, Satisfaction and Pleaſure in the Practice of eſpecial Duties; yet the moſt enlightened Perſons ought not to give unneceſſary and unreaſonable Diſturbance to all thoſe who practiſe the ſame Duties, tho' they do not attain ſo clear Ideas as God may have bleſt and favoured them with.

If we labour in our Zeal to proſelyte the *Learned* to our Scheme, the moſt part of them are ſo deeply rooted in their old Opinions, ſo unmoveably eſtabliſhed in their particular Forms, ſo ſelf-ſatisfied in what they believe, ſo much prejudiced againſt any further Light, that we ſhall probably do nothing but awaken their learned Anger, to fix the Brand of *Hereſy* upon us, and to overwhelm the Hints of any brighter Diſcovery with Clamours and hard Names, and drown them in Noiſe and Darkneſs.

If we are too ſolicitous to perſuade the *unlearned Chriſtian* to come into any better Explication of this Doctrine than he has learnt in his younger Years, we have the ſame huge Prejudices to encounter here as in the *learned World*; nor can we hope for much better Succeſs, if we attempt to change his ancient Opinion by a haſty and induſtrious Zeal. Hard Names and Reproaches are Weapons ever at hand, and common both to the Wiſe and the Unwiſe, the *Greek* and the *Barbarian*. The *vulgar Chriſtian* is as expert at them as the *Scholar*. Beſides,

Beſides, if he be a Perſon of weaker Underſtanding whom we addreſs with our new Explication, and we ſet ourſelves hard at work to ſhake his old Notions, but in the mere *Modus* of things, we may happen to unhinge him, as it were, and throw him off from his Center; we may imbarraſs his Mind with inward Conteſts, which may be too hard for him; and we may tempt him to lay out too many of his Thoughts and Hours on ſome *particular Explications* of this Doctrine, on the *Subſtance* of which he had long before built his pious Practices and Devotions, tho' mingled with ſome innocent Miſtakes.

Yet theſe accidental Inconveniences are not a ſufficient reaſon for our ſupine and perpetual Contentment with confuſed Sentiments and unintelligible Speeches about the *Modus* of ſacred Truths, if clearer Ideas are any ways attainable. There are juſt and ſtrong Motives that may excite us to ſearch into the deep things of God, and to propoſe all our Improvements in Knowledge, to the World and the Church, tho' there are no Reaſons or Motives ſufficient to impel us to impoſe our improved Notions on others, or to raiſe Contentions and Quarrels on the account of them.

All our particular *Illuſtrations* therefore, or *clearer Conceptions* of this ſublime Doctrine which God at any time may have favoured

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us with, ſhould be propoſed to the Chriſtian World with great Modeſty, with a humble Senſe of our fallible Natures, with a gentle Addreſs to the Wiſe and to the Unwiſe, without impoſing upon their Judgments or dictating to their Faith, and with a zealous Care to maintain all thoſe neceſſary practical Regards to the *Holy Trinity*, which are of ſo much greater Importance.

And if it be an unreaſonable thing to dictate to our Fellow-Chriſtians, and urge our particular Sentiments on them in theſe myſterious Points, how much more culpable and domineering is it to eſtabliſh any eſpecial Form of Human Explication of this ſacred Doctrine as a *Teſt of Orthodoxy and Chriſtianity!* How vain a Preſumption 'tis with a Pretence of Divine Authority to impoſe mere Human Explications upon the Conſciences of Men, and to forbid them all the ſacred Bleſſings of eſpecial Communion in the Goſpel, unleſs they teſtify their Aſſent to ſuch a particular *Hypotheſis* or Scheme of Explication, which the Impoſers confeſs to be human, and yet impoſe it in their own preſcribed Form of Words.

The Perſons who are guilty of this uncharitable Practice may conſecrate their Impoſitions, and their Excommunications with holy Names, and call them *pure Zeal for the Divinity of Chriſt*; but I ſuſpect it will be found in the great Day to deſerve no bet-

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ter a Character than a *miſtaken Zeal* for the *Honour of Chriſt*, mingled perhaps with Zeal for *the Divinity of their own Notions*, which they had incorporated with the plain and expreſs Revelations of the Godhead of *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord.

He that makes a private and particular Explication of any Doctrine which is dark and doubtful in itſelf, and *not clearly revealed* in Scripture, as neceſſary as the Doctrine itſelf, which is plain and *clearly revealed*, puts the Matters of *Faith* and *Opinion* on the ſame Foot, and intrudes too much upon the Authority and Kingdom of our Lord *Jeſus* in his Church.

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